



PRACTICES OF COEXISTENCE

Constructions of the Other
in Early Modern Perceptions

Edited by MARIANNA D. BIRNBAUM
and MARCELL SEBŐK

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INTRODUCTION

Practices of Coexistence

Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perceptions

MARIANNA D. BIRNBAUM and MARCELL SEBŐK

The idea for this book developed some years ago, in the context of a course on “Renaissance Orientalism” that we taught together in the Department of Medieval Studies of Central European University. We collected the most promising student papers that dealt with the processes of image-making and “Othering,” with the plan to offer a selection of them to a wider reading public. As a working title, we first used the name of the course, but we soon realized that both “Renaissance” and “Orientalism” were problematic designations, since both carry heavy historical and political burdens that still generate heated debates in the profession. We did not want to commit ourselves to any controversial notions of scholarship; nor did we want our volume to be categorized under the exclusive rubrics of Renaissance or colonial studies.

The essays in this book deal to a large extent with images, representations, projections, and perceptions based on various experiences of coexistence. Although the individual contributions contain sources and references of iconography, ours is not just another volume of art history or visual studies. As examples of practices in diverse historical contexts, the book includes a variety of textual material, such as literary productions, rhetorical exercises, dramatic applications, chronicles, epistles, and diary-type historical accounts with ethnographic sensitivities. Thus, supported by a thorough research apparatus, these studies propose a new cultural history of the early modern coexistence of various communities, as identified in current research by young scholars. Their contributions either offer revisionist perspectives on their chosen subjects or suggest new interpretations concerning some better-known issues.

Another novel feature of the volume is the deliberate displacement of traditional scholarly foci to an investigation of rarely examined regions and practices. This approach allows the contributors to present their special areas of research and to share an off-centered vision of “the Renaissance” instead of the grand narrative of previous scholarship.¹

Realms of coexistence offer us meaningful practices for historical reconstructions and interpretations: there are numerous examples of exchanges, interactions, cooperation, and resistance to investigate. Simultaneously, we can identify earlier professed applications of behavior, bent to accommodate the rules and values influenced by the extant political-cultural circumstances and, consequently, the shifting modes of negotiating the setting. Coexistence involved attitudes both inherited and learned toward the Other, including those models that developed in the learning process just prior to and during migration, and at the beginning of a new period in life that meant living together with new—often unwanted—neighbors within a new community. Coexistence was a disheartening experience for people with divergent cultural backgrounds, often resulting in conflicts, condemnations, and exclusions, or in an exercise of forced tolerance and apprehension at the same time. Thus coexistence also meant a usable context (a chance) toward a more advanced sensibility regarding the cohabiting members of communities, or releasing the Other of that stigma.

The nature of the “infidel” had been discussed throughout the European Middle Ages, although there was no consensus on the meaning of

¹ From recent scholarship on early modern Europe, a collection of essays again called attention to the importance of a new approach, a decentered view in discussing contemporary knowledge production. See László Kontler, Antonella Romano, Silvia Sebastiani, and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, eds. *Negotiating Knowledge in Early Modern Empires: A Decentered View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Another recent series of studies looked at the cultural exchanges between “Renaissance” civilizations and cited examples of the mutual commercial, intellectual, and cultural influences between East and West that had developed in the medieval period between Islam and Christendom: see Gerard MacLean, ed., *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005). Earlier, Natalie Zemon Davis and Peter Burke proposed, among others, a novel treatment of the Renaissance as a cultural program rather than a single historical era, a complex endeavor of European origins, but with various and simultaneous practices beyond Europe too. A more refined definition of “early modern studies” and “postmodern Renaissance studies” is best described by Randolph Starn, “The Early Modern Muddle,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 6, no. 3 (2002): 296–307; “A Postmodern Renaissance?” *Renaissance Quarterly* 60 (2007): 1–24.

that concept. From the general Christian point of view, it became a flexible category, imposed on the “barbarians,” the “Turks,” and anyone of a darker skin color. The category of “infidel” as an imprint of various forms of coexistence was formulated in a process of negotiations that resulted in multiple discourses on the Other as intruders, conquerors, adversaries, or merely winners. Moreover, examples show that the Other was not necessarily a foreigner, a newcomer, or even a Muslim but rather an “alienated” construct in the mind that then appeared in the practices of the locals. The real and the constructed Other could be “at arm’s length,” and that kind of cohabitant living could foster mutual configurations of everyday practices, consensual rules, and ultimately, the strategies and structures of coexistence. Within this context, a higher degree of flexibility and a mutual learning process was ideally required to overcome political/cultural givens, psychological distancing and self-distancing, and to shape new behavioral patterns. The dynamics of early modern societies also helped to refashion the identities of locals and newcomers as inhabitants of urban spaces and territories, although there remained a steady, continued claim for certain accepted values and historical references. The *modus operandi* of early modern empires that substantially influenced the commercial and political transactions, religious practices, and agencies of everyday life consequently resulted in new waves of migration, among other things.

It was tempting to give the volume a title such as “*Early Modern Orientalism*,” but that would have placed those studies within a Saidian terminology. Preparing a book that is dedicated to a new presentation of early modern practices of Othering and coexistence with the Other requires a contextualized position different from that of Said’s designation of the “Orientalism” concept (not just a statement of renunciation). We want to emphasize that the contributions in this volume are not limited to the discussion of the “encounter” with the Other and the consequent reinforcements of certain mental constructs and stereotyping.

The authors of the essays explored the means of living together and—when possible—the interactions that dominated the processes.² Said

² Imposing “Orientalism,” as it was proposed and developed in Edward Said’s work, would have resulted in an unintended discussion because of the different perspectives and revised perceptions of recent scholarship. “Orientalism,” as an attitude, practice, and discourse—and a notion of colonial behavior—was not yet performed in the sixteenth century, or was dissimilar to the eighteenth-century practices. Some recent scholarship still argues that Saidian Orientalism appeared in a nascent form in

himself stressed in his book that his theoretical framework was conceived as a primary reference to history from the Industrial Revolution onward, when the technologically superior West was able to dominate and colonize the weaker East (his theory is applicable to Napoleon's Egypt, or the British Raj in India). Within the early modern period, the sixteenth century witnessed the expansion of the Ottoman Empire (taking possession of the former Byzantine Empire and much of the Venetian, Habsburg, and Holy Roman Empires), but the military, technological, and cultural superiority of the West, "a precondition for Orientalism, was not operative until well into the eighteenth century."³ In any case, our book does not lend itself to tidy reductions to a single theory; it seeks to identify the flights of imagination as well as the perceptions of shared experiences in their obvious complexities.

If any theoretical agenda is needed, we would be more inclined to illustrate the concepts and terms of Marie Louise Pratt as they appear in *Imperial Eyes*, where she offers a dialectic and historicized approach to early modern travel writing and coins the term "contact zone." Pratt refers to "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict."⁴

the medieval and early modern periods, when Islam was "demonized." Daniel Witkus's interpretation of the English literary tradition suggests the beginning of an early modern Orientalist discourse "in an era when the European relationship of the Orient was not yet one of colonial dominance—when, in fact, that relationship was one of anxiety and awe on the part of the Europeans." See Daniel J. Witkus, "Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. David R. Blank and Michael Frassetto (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 207–30.

³ James G. Harper, ed., introduction to *The Turk and the Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism* (Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 7–8.

⁴ Pratt continues: "By using the term 'contact,' I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other." Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 6–7. As for other usable conceptual frames and examinations, mention should be made of Nancy Bisaha's work, which offers a new discourse analysis of Renaissance humanists who (re)created the division between East and West by

Yet these contacts are always more than just conquest and domination, and the contributors to this volume explore how such relations are constituted and perpetuated. Importantly, it is not the “Western eye” that serves as the exclusive perspective of these writings, though there are English, Spanish, and Italian examples within the selection. Hungarian, Transylvanian, Moldavian, Ragusan/Dalmatian, and Ottoman perspectives are also represented in the studies, together with their subsequent, measurable effects on the cultural notions or habits formed in everyday life. Abandoning the obsolescent “Western views of Islam” or the Other, these young scholars suggest a shift from the “imperial eye” to focusing on the interplay between processes and practices of Western, Eastern, and in-between practitioners of communities and individuals in their coexistence in better- or lesser-known contact zones.⁵

Nonetheless, the authors do not deny the long-lasting presence of stereotypes and the often violent attitudes they provoke regarding the Other; they call our attention to both, to the remaining and the changing perceptions displayed by all sides. Beyond continuity and change, it should also be noted that perpetuating stereotypical thinking could lead to the exclusion or even the extreme mistreatment of the coexisting members of a community, such as the persecution of non-Christians on the one hand and the expulsion or torture of Christians on the other.

There is a telling example from the sixteenth century: an Armenian chronicle from 1556 reveals that, from the very beginning of his reign, Stephen Rareș, the Moldavian ruler, persecuted Armenian and Ottoman merchants, although as the document claims, the latter were in fact Jews living under Ottoman rule.⁶ Persecuting merchants from the Ottoman

using the Ottoman Turks as a reference group of enemies, scapegoats, infidels, and barbarians, see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Another piece of recent scholarship that uses the “East” and “West” classification, primarily in terms of geographical distinction, proposes a closer look at the circulation of artistic products that had a mediating role between Eastern and Western churches and empires: see Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

⁵ This division into Western, Eastern, and in-between practices was created to avoid the predominant dichotomy of scholarship. The reduction of focus and the absolute application of the terms “East” and “West” is no longer feasible in early modern studies.

⁶ See the study of Teodora C. Artimon in this volume.

Empire was a familiar phenomenon: Moldavian as well as other East Central European rulers are on record as having acted on their ethnic antipathies, just as the Ottoman Turks were known to use various forms of violence against their captives. However, there were also examples of Ottomans tolerating the presence of those who complied only outwardly with the rules—who, for instance, followed Oriental dress codes but remained practicing Christians or Jews.⁷

As is known, in the Ottoman Empire, Jews performed crucial functions as advisers to the sultan's court, and as agents and tax farmers. Ottoman leaders showed a continued interest in getting Jews to settle in their territories. Lacking a recognized homeland, and enjoying more privileges than elsewhere, Jews were considered more loyal to the Porte than Christians living under Ottoman rule.⁸ Although Jewish communities existed in Edirne and Salonika before the fall of Constantinople, after 1453, Jewish migration to the Empire increased measurably. In his storied circular from the mid-fifteenth century, Isaac Sarfati (Ytzhak Trarfati), a refugee from Germany, encouraged Jews to move to the land where "every man may dwell at peace under his own fig-tree."⁹

In the opening study of the volume, bearing in mind the complexities embedded in each historical fact, Ágnes Drosztmér discusses the main features of the representations of Suleyman the Magnificent as they appear in Ottoman and European discourse. She investigates the processes leading to the alterations displayed in the images as they surface in vernacular Hungarian literature. After reviewing how the earlier widely shared constructs were "recast," Drosztmér seeks out an idiosyncratic set of Hungarian attributes. She claims that some could have developed simultaneously because of the special conditions and circumstances of everyday interactions with the Ottomans in the tripartite Kingdom of Hungary. She suggests that Hungarian literary discourse always depended on the actual mil-

⁷ Practicing tolerance in a confessionally divided world, especially from the century of the Reformations onwards, was becoming an even more complex duty that needed more sensitivity and perseverance than before. For questions of toleration and prejudice, see Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance of the European Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁸ See Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2003), especially 74–117.

⁹ Cited by Halil İnalcık, "Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation," in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 4–5.

itary and political contexts, emphasizing that those also had an increasing impact on the emergence of Hungarian national identity. In connection with this, she considers the possible audience and the role and special features of oral culture in sixteenth-century Hungary.

Seda Erkoç offers a close reading of a selection of sixteenth-century sources devoted to the murder of Sehzade Mustafa, the eldest son and heir to the throne of Suleyman the Magnificent who was strangled in 1553 at the command of his father. Erkoç renders a comparative analysis of several texts that respond to a single historical event in order to provide the reader with the Eastern and Western constructs regarding the same murder. Erkoç focuses on the evaluation of two English works devoted to the subject: the anonymous Cambridge play *Solymanniade* and Fulke Greville's closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mustafa*. She also investigates Nicolas Moffan's work and relevant parts of Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*, as well as reports on Mustafa's death as they appear in Turkish sources. She contends that Anglo-Ottoman proximity transformed the rhetoric on the Turk, but at the same time, competing texts from Europe offered more ambivalent representations of the East. The author suggests a new interpretation and a revisionist critique of Edward Said's thesis.

Özden Merçan, in a close examination of the storied letter of Pope Pius II, proposes a revision to the scholarship that has treated that text as a bona fide document in which the pope calls upon Sultan Mehmed, the addressee, to convert. Not repeating previous arguments, Merçan demonstrates that the real purpose of the letter was different than what it claimed. Pius II (Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini), one of the best-trained humanists of his time, wrote the letter as a propaganda tool and ideological support for Christian communities, for he was planning to organize a new crusade against the Turks. To underpin her claim, Merçan compares Pius's letter with an "authentic" conversion letter written by another pope, Alexander III. In addition, she offers a detailed textual analysis of Pius II's other works to demonstrate his attitudes regarding the Ottomans. Dealing with the sources and themes found in the pope's oeuvre, Merçan identifies the mostly medieval anti-Islamic polemical literature that, intermingled with humanist rhetoric, was meant to inspire Pius II's intended Christian audience.

Johanna Tóth's essay concerns the activities of the multiethnic society of Algiers at the end of the sixteenth century, where coexistence among Moors, Ottoman Turks, Berbers, Moriscos, Jews, Christians, corsairs, and

renegades was the natural way of life. Algiers was described and interpreted by Antonio de Sosa, a high-ranking member of the Hispano-Italian Church of Portuguese origin who was held for ransom (and spent time in the house of a renegade Jew).¹⁰ Exploring the different layers of that society within the context of travel writing and the restrictions of captivity, in addition to describing the misfortunes of its author, de Sosa's work shows a remarkable comprehension of the history, traditions, and daily practices of the society of Algiers. His work expands our knowledge of contemporary ethnography and traditions of classification. Tóth introduces us to a special "field worker," a European Christian who, burdened by many inherited prejudices, was nevertheless able to observe a considerably different community with precision and sensibility, offering us a more nuanced view of a Muslim society than do the majority of his contemporaries.

Lovro Kunčević focuses on the stereotyping of the Other in two Adriatic city-states, Venice and Ragusa, that "shared an uneasy coexistence marked by constant tensions and conflicts," mainly because of their profound asymmetry in size and power. Instead of confronting the unknown and the alien, in the course of Kunčević's investigation, the "dialogue" was conducted between two interacting cultural elites, known and familiar to each other. Reexamining their function in terms of coexistence, Kunčević offers an arsenal of references, including legends, local annals, poetic works, and pastoral plays, information recorded by diplomats, historians, and the literati. The result is an astonishing parade of historical distrust: The Ragusans appear as "slightly paranoid," whereas Venice claims that the Ragusans (who in the Venetian mind did not deserve to be called a true republic), in their pathological hatred for Venice, support the Ottomans. Kunčević demonstrates that, through mutually false or exaggerated assessments, the two Mediterranean communities created extreme, absurd images of each other and were guided by them for centuries.

Teodora C. Artimon introduces us to late medieval and early modern Moldavia, a territory barely known to the West. She reveals the attitudes of generations of Moldavian rulers towards the Ottomans, as shown by their political agendas and unbridled imagination. Moldavia, a buffer zone that faced threats from, alternately, the Ottomans, the Tartars, and the Poles,

¹⁰ Miguel de Cervantes was in captivity in Algiers at the same time, and he and de Sosa became friends there.

always needed an able ruler to design strategies or develop negotiating skills vis-à-vis the Other. Artimon concentrates on Stephen the Great's anti-Ottoman campaigns, which were supported by the writings of his courtiers, and she also provides us with his and his successors' iconographical programs as they still appear on the exteriors of Moldavian monasteries. Artimon offers a novel interpretation of Peter Rareș' position regarding the great foe, and she looks at the dynamics of his and his sons' changing perception of the Ottomans. A particularly interesting feature of Artimon's contribution is a short narrative by a contemporary chronicler in the court of Elija Rareș (the latter had converted and embraced Islam). The piece deals with the unwanted "unbelievers" in their midst (the Ottoman advisers as well as the harem at the Rareș court) who, representing an alien way of life in the middle of a Christian community, exposed them to the everyday lives and social, dressing, and eating habits of the Ottoman Other.

There are several recurring themes in this volume. One of them is an inquiry into the persona of Suleyman the Magnificent, whose real and imagined presence remained influential in the early modern world. He appears as the "universal ruler" in Hungarian lore and as the world conqueror, "a good fowler" in Ottoman sources. When he helped Peter Rareș to regain his power, the priest Macarie in his chronicle calls Suleyman "the proud emperor" who looked at the prince of Moldavia "with human compassion." The same author earlier described Suleyman "as the damned ruler," who "just like a bird that with its large wings will bind the smaller birds to itself."

Another of the recurring and overarching issues featured is conversion (and/or transition). One study highlights the beginnings of a lengthy process in which literary works composed in Latin slowly give way to productions in the Hungarian vernacular. Discussing the murder of Mustafa, the author of the essay attempts to trace the emergence of new (English) strategies in representing the Other, as a result of alliances with the "Turke," while also pointing to more clear-cut rhetorical differences than had been displayed in earlier examples of contemporary literature. Representing a transition within a genre, Pope Pius II's letter, which on the surface called for conversion, is shown as a humanist literary construct, a political writing composed and launched as a hortatory piece for Latin Christians to encourage them and increase their feelings of superiority over the Ottomans. The work of Antonio de Sosa, who became a captive and lived in the house of a converted Jew, demonstrates that his experiences changed his

perceptions of Jewish and other ethnic communities of Algiers. By reading about the permanent tensions and competition between Venice and Ragusa, we can watch a process of phylogeny that began to ease only in the modern era by slowly transcending the mutual stereotypes. Although the reasons for Elija Rares's conversion to Islam remain opaque, there is an attempt (in the final study of the volume) to reconstruct his decision. By embedding an Ottoman community in his court, the Moldavian prince introduced a new form of coexistence. This decision was to draw harsh criticism, but it also created new practices of coexistence in his principality.¹¹

These various analyses demonstrate that the connotations of the word "Ottoman" keep changing during the period under investigation. We hope that for this reason too, our volume will add to a broader understanding of Suleyman's court and its political, military, and artistic activities, as it was perceived by his foes and appreciated by his supporters. Parallel to these investigations, the authors probe into the methods and practices of Ottoman propaganda: the writings of court historians (often revealing a web of mixed intentions and goals) and the processes of negotiation employed so efficiently by the imperial staff.

We trust that such a series of focused case studies, contributed by a young generation of scholars, can challenge some of the canonized theses of the field. Moreover, we hope that their work will be received with interest by the scholarly community of early modernists.

¹¹ No linkage between these conversions is intended here. However, it should be noted that the phenomenon of conversion could be considered a typical process (either individual or communal) of the early modern era, as it was in our case studies.

The Good Fowler as a World Conqueror:

Images of Suleyman the Magnificent in Early Modern Hungarian Literary Practice

ÁGNES DROSZTMÉR

A central figure in the sixteenth century, both on the world stage and in the Ottoman campaigns against Hungary, Suleyman the Magnificent was the subject of various artistic and literary works throughout the Ottoman Empire and various parts of Europe as well. Ottoman conquests reached their peak under his reign, and on the global scene, he competed with European emperors in making new territorial claims as the known world expanded. These processes and his personal role in them were presented in Ottoman historiography in consciously created, uniform depictions and were reflected in all possible media. These images, with some alterations, found their way into European works about the sultan as well, and meanwhile, diverse depictions of him appeared in European historiography and literature. In the course of the Ottoman Empire's expansion in continental Europe and continuous campaigns, battles, and sieges across Hungary, the Hungarian Kingdom was divided into three parts.

The campaigns were reflected in numerous literary works that partly relied on chronicles, some translated from the Latin, but many of them written and circulated in the areas affected by everyday struggles with the Turks. These works also reflect the presence and role of Suleyman in the campaigns. Analyzing the images of Suleyman in the Hungarian context can answer fundamental questions regarding Hungarian attitudes toward a threatening Other and shed light on the early formation of national identity, along with the processes of formation of a literature written in the vernacular. Therefore, I shall investigate the main features of the practices presenting Suleyman in both the Ottoman and Western European discourses, and subsequently turn to the integration and possible altera-

tions of the images as they appear in Hungarian poetry. Furthermore, I shall discuss the changes and development of representational practices along with the factors (genre, audience) that could have influenced this image by presenting material from Hungarian literature. At the time, Hungarian literature was strongly divided, given its transition from orality to literacy and because of the split between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

The main corpus of my research is vernacular Hungarian poetry produced before the end of the sixteenth century—although what might be considered poetry will be addressed depending on formal features in the particular context. The second half of the sixteenth century was the period in Hungarian cultural history when vernacular literature emerged and its own rules evolved. Literature was also influenced by the spread of the printing press; its rules, form, media, and audience had just started to take shape. Even though most works of poetry were written down, they were transmitted mainly in oral form; thus the majority of the works I have examined bear the characteristics of both oral and written traditions. I shall also investigate the formation of the image of Suleyman in this specific political, cultural, and literary context, using vernacular Hungarian works that were either translated into or composed originally in Hungarian.

The Ottoman and the European Context

In the Ottoman discourse, the public image of Suleyman was consciously created by an intensive campaign aimed at communicating his claim of universal rule. When Suleyman took the throne, he was met with high expectations:¹ although all new rulers had to justify their power, Suleyman's reign was of special significance in the Ottoman context. A strong need for a new canon administrative law, coping with the expanding empire, was expressed in all levels of public discourse, centering on the

¹ Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman," in *Soliman le Magnifique et Son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 166; Cemal Kafadar, "The Myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post-Süleymanic Era," in *Suleyman the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis, 1993), 45–57.

concept of *adalet* (justice).² Thus “justness” became a *topos* characterizing Süleyman’s reign in Ottoman historiography. From the very beginning of his reign, Süleyman’s image as a righteous and just ruler was developed successfully and persisted long after his death.³ Another important feature of the period in the Ottoman context that had raised expectations regarding Süleyman’s rule was the spread of concepts of apocalypticism, fueled by the nearing Islamic millennium⁴ that was combined with contemporary Ottoman aims of creating a universal Muslim empire.⁵ Moreover, the death of Sultan Selim and the reign of a new sultan were also eagerly awaited because of Selim’s aggression against other Muslim states.⁶ Military uprisings in Egypt and Anatolia claiming the role of the *mahdi*, and the spread of religious heresies, also necessitated the strengthening of the sultan’s religious/political legitimacy. The Ottoman dynasty was referred to in messianic terms, with a stress on the Islamic millennium.⁷ These expectations during the life of Süleyman rose even higher, as under his reign, Ottoman conquests reached their zenith.⁸

² Christine Woodhead, “Perspectives on Süleyman,” in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 166.

³ Christine Woodhead cites some examples: “Justice and equity” (İbrahim Pecevi) appear shortly after the start of his reign. Celalzade: “The sweet perfume of his just deeds spread to the four corners of the earth,” Mustafa Ali, *Künhü’l-ahbar* (Essence of history), 1590s. Woodhead, “Perspectives on Süleyman,” 165.

⁴ Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah,” 166; Barbara Flemming, “Public Opinion under Sultan Süleyman,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 59–67.

⁵ Woodhead, “Perspectives on Süleyman,” 174; Cemal Kafadar, “The Myth of the Golden Age”; Flemming, “Public Opinion under Sultan Süleyman,” 59; John Elliott, “Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry: The European Perspective,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 165–74.

⁶ Pál Fodor, “A Bécsbe vezető út” [The road leading to Vienna], in Pál Fodor, *A szultán és az aranyalma* [The Sultan and the golden apple] (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 363.

⁷ Ibid., 377–78. The ideas of Molla Kabiz and Oglan Sejh about the superiority of Jesus over Mohammed were especially hazardous for the Ottomans.

⁸ By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a change occurred in Ottoman historiography: a turn to the genre of the more comprehensive *tarih* instead of exemplary royal biography and annals (*tevarih*). With the birth of the new genre, it was no longer the legendary past that was referred to as a golden age but the achievements of a recent period—in particular, the *kanun* (canon) that was introduced by Süleyman. Woodhead, “Perspectives on Süleyman,” 181–82. Süleyman’s reign, at the same time, faced critiques in his life (by *selefs*, “fundamentalists,” who regarded the era of Mohammed as the ultimate golden age) and later. After it was obvious that hopes for universal rule were lost, the works became increasingly pessimistic. See Kafadar, “The Myth of the Golden Age,” 48.

The image of the sultan as a powerful ruler was propagated by various means: artistic projects and patronage, large-scale architectural programs, public festivities, and the operation of the administration.⁹ Support for literature, particularly divan poetry, was exceptionally important for Süleyman, who himself produced poetry. Writers played a central role in conveying the favored and expected imperial image. Ottoman works discussed the military and political events of Süleyman's rule in a moralistic framework, justifying his decisions and deeds, and ensuring that his image as a just ruler was never harmed.¹⁰ Works from that period also refer to the concept of *adalet*, praising the sultan for practicing it. The sultan was depicted as a protector of the empire and lauded for his military skills as *sahibkiran* (world conqueror); his rule was referred to as the manifestation of the Ottoman golden age.¹¹

A typical Ottoman work about Süleyman is the *Süleymanname*, composed by the historian Arifi in 1558, an example of the *sehnames* ("king's books") genre. The ruler is presented as a brilliant statesman, commander, hunter, promoter of Islam, and cultural patron. Royal justice is a leitmotif of the work: Süleyman is depicted as a warrior king and a just ruler.¹²

⁹ Such an architectural project was the creation of the Süleymaniye complex and the water distribution system; other means of propagating the desired public image were coinage, festivities, and imperial processions. Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman," 169–70; Michael Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 287–323; Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State, A Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 195–216.

¹⁰ For example, Pasha Lütfi's *Asafname* deals with the family relations of Süleyman and focuses on a sensitive topic in the life of the sultan: the death of his son Mustafa. Pasha Lütfi blames the death of the prince on Pasha Rüstem. Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman," 178.

¹¹ The central notion of the Ottoman concept of the golden age was *mizan*, meaning "balance" or "equilibrium." The concept of the golden age in Islam praised simplicity, an existence without property or war, and an Arcadian way of life instead of the "iron age," an age of decay, that actually prevailed at the time. See Peter Burke, "Concepts of the 'Golden Age' in the Renaissance," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, 154–63.

¹² Another important Ottoman source on the desired image of Süleyman is Celalzade's *Tabakatü'l-memalik ve derecatü'l-mesalik* [Levels of the dominions and grades of the professions], a prime example of Ottoman royal biography. It lists events during Süleyman's reign and praises the sultan's virtues: his natural exercise of *adalet*, the sultan as a protector and benefactor of his people, and his military skills as *sahibkiran*. Woodhead, "Perspectives on Süleyman," 172.

The sultan's physical appearance was fundamental because of the centrality of the concept of physiognomy (physical features expressing personality). Thus literary descriptions of him closely follow the traditions of mystical Sufi imagery, placing divine beauty—physical and ideal beauty intertwined—at the center.¹³ However, by focusing on the ideal leader, the Ottoman images of Suleyman were rarely concerned with his personality.¹⁴ Their aim was to demonstrate Suleyman's competence in affairs of state, uphold his personal authority, and justify the power of the whole dynasty.¹⁵ It is important to note that the expression of these aims underwent a major change in the second half of Suleyman's reign, when the empire's expansion slowed down and territorial limits became more established, resulting in a new state identity that focused on the creation of an orthodox Islamic society. This process required a new moral and aesthetic canon, mediating a new, more pious public image of Suleyman.¹⁶ All in all, Suleyman's rule can be seen as constituting a transition in the governing styles of Ottoman sultanates, shifting from personal military leadership to a more formal role at the top of the hierarchy of a great empire as the guarantor of justice. The sultan became a more symbolic figure, less involved personally in military acts.¹⁷

Besides court historiography and poetry, artistic representations and the politics of art were also key in constructing the desired image of the ruler. Miniatures displayed military achievements; Ottoman portraiture reflected claims for independent power and the consolidation of the self-

¹³ A series of examples from poet Baki: "Your beauty's rays illuminate the world like the sun, / Your love's echoes fill the sphere of 'Be and it was done'; [...] Upon your cheek in gnarly knots lie your curly strands, / Damascenes all girt to march upon the Holy Lands; [...] Your sapling-cypress swaying gait, let him but one time know / The gardener in his lawn would lay the graceful willow low / Before your cheek prostrate themselves, the jessamine in rows / The garden cypress stands erect before your upright pose." Cited from Walter G. Andrews, "Literary Art of the Golden Age: The Age of Süleyman," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 391–92, 396. Translation by Walter G. Andrews.

¹⁴ Arifi's work contains some elements referring to the sultan's personality, such as his sense of humor, love, and mourning, but these elements are minimized. Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State," 212.

¹⁵ Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 169.

¹⁶ In this process, the first step to be taken was the execution of Pasha Ibrahim, as he was the propagator of the Western-style program. Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State," 195–96.

¹⁷ Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 189.

image of the empire.¹⁸ Artistic patronage and the collection of luxury items reflected aspirations for universal rule.¹⁹ The explicit and implicit reinterpretations of Western modes of communicating power, also involving non-Islamic royal status symbols such as Western-type regalia, became part of the same narrative, especially in the first half of Suleyman's reign, which was marked by the influence of Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti. The Ottoman court's intense patronage of European artists was aimed at communicating Ottoman imperial claims to a European audience. A telling example is the commissioning of a golden helmet from Venetian goldsmiths. In the West the Venetian helmet was publicly displayed during imperial processions (such as in Vienna in 1532) that were modeled on contemporary Habsburg ceremonies, particularly the coronation of Charles V in Bologna as Holy Roman Emperor in 1529. The iconography of the helmet evoked representations of Alexander the Great and the papal tiara, reflecting universal imperial claims.²⁰

Among the elements used to construct the image of a perfect world ruler, there are special ones that justify these claims by referring to famous ideals or predecessors. Among them there is Solomon—an evident parallel for Suleyman because of the etymology of their names—and Alexander, whose image emerges in a wide variety of works both among Ottomans and in the West. The idea of emphasizing parallels between Suleyman and Alexander came from Ibrahim Pasha²¹ and was manifested by increasing pomp and grand architectural projects throughout the empire.

There were, however, other contemporary emperors seeking universal rule. The Habsburg dynasty, too, expressed this aspiration on various levels

¹⁸ The pictorial representations of Suleyman were determined by the traditions of Ottoman portraiture, according to which the placement of a figure intertwines with the surrounding text. In these images, the ruler is always placed in the center. Esin Atil, "The Image of Suleyman in Ottoman Art," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 363–77.

¹⁹ An example might be the sculpture of Mars, Diana, and Apollo, or the Corvinas of Matthias Corvinus that were taken to Istanbul after the conquest of Buda on the advice of Ibrahim Pasha, Suleyman's main art—and military—adviser. Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent," 289; Andrews, "Literary Art of the Golden Age," 390.

²⁰ The helmet's iconography also evokes ancient Near Eastern monarchs' helmets. See Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401, 409.

²¹ Fodor, "A Bécsbe vezető út," 382.

and through various media. Reactions to the Ottoman threat were also part of their propaganda, reawakening medieval images of Islam and the traditional response to them: the crusade. Awaiting the Last Judgment and prophecies connected to this idea were also common discourses during that period.²²

The West—meaning those parts of Europe that did not face a direct Ottoman threat—also assembled and created the image of the Ottoman sultan from various sources. The earliest descriptions of the sultan reflected the fact that European states expected a period of peace from Suleyman's rule.²³ Information on the Ottoman emperor arrived in the West primarily in the form of reports from envoys and later found its way into other genres reaching wider audiences.²⁴ These accounts had significant limitations: they followed strict norms in their forms and set of *topoi*, and most of them did not rely on personal experience, as the sultan could only be seen in person by a highly restricted group of diplomats. Most of the accounts repeat *topoi* used in Ottoman representational patterns. They depict the lavishness of the sultan's public appearances, or make references to King Solomon and Alexander the Great and to the ruler's just-

²² In reality, the two empires possessed roughly equal forces in terms of area, population, agricultural production, and so on. Elliott, "Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry," 166; Charles Issawi, "The Ottoman-Habsburg Balance of Forces," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 157–63. On the level of the *histoire de longue durée*, based on the theory of Fernand Braudel, they were both part of the same Mediterranean context and shared parallel geographies and resources. See also Maurice Aymard, "La Méditerranée ottomane de Fernand Braudel," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 69–85.

²³ Paolo Giovio wrote: "It seemed to all men that a gentle lamb had succeeded a fierce lion . . . since Suleiman himself was young and of no experience . . . and altogether given to rest and quietness." Pope Leo, when he "heard for a surety that Selimus was dead, he commanded that the Litany and common prayers be sung throughout all Rome, in which men should go on barefoot." Paolo Giovio, *A Shorte Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles*, trans. Peter Ashton (London, 1546), folio C, cited by Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent: 1520–1566* (Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University press, 1944), 37.

²⁴ Bartolomeo Contarini, Venetian envoy to Constantinople in 1519–1520, described Suleyman as "tall and slender . . . with a thin and bony face . . . friendly and in good humor . . . enjoys reading, knowledgeable and shows good judgment." Cited by Alan Fisher, "The Life and Family of Suleyman I," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 10. See also Fodor, "A Bécsbe vezető út," 363. According to Contarini, the new ruler had the perfect features to bring an era of peace into the relations of the Ottoman Empire and the West.

ness and piety,²⁵ proving that the visible elements of the public image the sultan consciously cultivated had found their audiences.

Furthermore, any hints about the sultan's personality were considered noteworthy for the authors of these accounts—such as his public Friday prayers, the influence of his wife Hurrem in the palace, or Suleyman's relationship with his sons. This coverage, however, rapidly devolved into fiction, depicting the emperor of the Turks as a terrifying and exotic yet pathetic figure.²⁶ In Western literary works, the episode of the killing of his son Mustafa became the most popular story about Suleyman. This event, recorded by chroniclers and evoked by mourning poems, found its way to Western audiences and became the subject of plays and opera librettos as far abroad as France and England. Evidently, the farther the story of Mustafa traveled, the more it became the pliable "raw material" for plays in which the sultan appeared as the prototype of the cruel Turk.²⁷

Hungarian Representations—Images of the Universal Ruler

When investigating the Hungarian material, one of the main tasks is to identify the degree to which the aforementioned practices were repeated in the Hungarian representations. That, as well as the possible alterations of Suleyman's image, can reveal a great deal about the awareness, the

²⁵ E.g., Ogier Ghislen de Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*, outlining the history of the Turks, refers to Solomon and Alexander, demonstrating their popularity under the reign of Suleyman. *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 55.

²⁶ "The position of the sons of the Turkish Sultans is a most unhappy one. . . . The Turks tolerate no rival to the throne," Busbecq reflects regarding the story of Suleyman and Mustafa (*Turkish Letters*, 30). In another context, the story was paralleled with the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Night. See Frank Lestringant, "La monarchie française au miroir ottoman: le portrait de Soliman le Magnifique, de Charles IX à Henri III," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 65.

²⁷ For instance, a sixteenth-century English school play version of the plot involves classical elements of Shakespearean dramas, such as the appearance of a ghost—in this case, Selim, Suleyman's father. See the contribution of Seda Erkoç in this volume and her "Repercussions of a Murder: The Death of Sehzade Mustafa on the Early Modern English Stage," *Annual of medieval studies at CEU* 15 (2009): 145–68. See also Eve R. Meyer, "The Image of the Turk in European Performing Arts," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 279–86, and Lestringant, "La monarchie française au miroir ottoman," 51–68.

functions, and the relevant intercultural discussions of universal rule. Was there a parallel, idiosyncratic Hungarian image of the sultan that would have developed in the special circumstances of the tripartite kingdom, reflecting everyday interactions with the Ottomans? And if so, on what literary traditions could this alternate image have rested?

Before starting a detailed discussion of these issues, it should be noted that the sixteenth century was the period when the newly born literature of the written vernacular began to develop its own, yet unsettled and variable rules. There were no strict boundaries of genres in this literature; it flourished between oral transmission and recorded text. Oral performance determined the principal formal characteristics of texts: they were composed to be suitable for reading aloud; they had simple, rhyming strophes (four lines with the same rhyme, often a self-rhyme), with little possibility for variations. The spread of print helped the distribution of this fixed form and, at the same time, made possible a newer process of reading: silent, individual absorption of the text. This literature can be classified on a formal basis, even though the same poetic form could contain a wide range of contents, from siege descriptions to love stories in translation. Such poetry is the source material of my research, with a focus on pieces of “event poetry,” or to be more precise, “report songs.” These works are a subgenre of narrative poetry and recount events that occurred shortly before they were retold in verse.

When analyzing representational practices of the Ottoman ruler, the question of authenticity must also be discussed. In general, early Hungarian narrative poems always refer to their sources, such as the Bible or an ancient Roman story, since it was crucial to demonstrate that there were no fictional elements in the works.²⁸ However, report songs discussing

²⁸ Thus historical songs are not direct interpretations of an event but rather, almost by definition, translations of a source. István Vadai, “Kolozsvárott kötetet komponálni” [Composing a volume in Kolozsvár], in *Tinódi Sebestyén és a régi magyar verses epika. A 2006. évi budapesti és kolozsvári Tinódi-konferenciák előadásai* [Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos and old Hungarian narrative poetry: Proceedings of the Tinódi Conferences held in Budapest and Kolozsvár/Cluj in 2006], ed. István Csörsz Rumen (Cluj: Kriterion, 2008), 81. For instance, in the case of the fifteenth-century *Szabács viadala*, the method of narration also gives evidence that he was present at the siege, but at the same time, he refers to his other sources, e.g., “As Turkish people talk about this” (“ment arról immár török nép beszél”): *Szabács viadala* [The siege of Szabács], in *Régi magyar költők tára XVI. század* [Thesaurus of old Hungarian poetry, 16th century; hereinafter: RMKT] vol. 1, ed. Cyrill Horváth (Budapest: MTA, 1921), 468–72, line 107.

current events differ from other genres of epic poetry. They rely not primarily on written sources but on eyewitness reports, whether first- or secondhand. Since most authors could not have had any personal experiences concerning the sultan, they had to “invent” the figure of the ruler by relying on oral sources.

Based on the types of the related events, I shall discuss the literary images of Suleyman focusing on two main branches of event types: those that occurred outside Hungary, and those that took place inside the country. The first group will have more translations, texts that recount events that had happened in another cultural, geographical, or temporal context. For such works, patterns present in international discourse can be more readily found. The second group of events includes important turning points of the Ottoman campaigns in Hungary, momentous battles, sieges, and other events, such as the capture of Buda in 1541. It can be assumed that in works describing those occurrences, schemes specific to vernacular Hungarian literary discourse can be discerned more often.

Turning first to the issue of images of the sultan as a potential universal ruler present in the Ottoman and Western humanist historiography, the question is whether they were also present in Hungarian vernacular works, and if so, what type of modifications and alterations are displayed in them. The following fragments will demonstrate that discourses that were widespread in European and Ottoman cultures were part of the Hungarian literary discourse as well.

András Valkai's *Story of Hariadenus* (Barbarossa Hayreddin),²⁹ describing the conquest of North Africa and the campaigns of Suleyman against Tunis, is an example of the “translated images” of Suleyman, as the work is based on Paolo Giovio's *Historianum suo temporis*. The text evidences the sultan's claims to world power: “And his will is to go to the East, / Against nations of the East, / His other army he prepared against Christians, / Made great arrangements on the sea. // [His aim is] To conquer, to take many countries, / To conquer for himself all of the world.”³⁰ The work

²⁹ Published in Kolozsvár in 1573 and translated from Paolo Giovio's *Historianum suo temporis*, book 33. RMKT XVI/ 9, ed. Béla Varjas (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1990), 117–50. In the citations, Roman numbers refer to the parts, Arabic numbers to the strophes. Any exceptions to this rule will be indicated.

³⁰ “És vagyon szándéka neki napkeletre, / Napkelet felé való nemzetekre, / Más hadát készíté Keresztyénekre, / Nagy készüléket teszen az tengerre. [...] Elfoglalja, megvgyen sok országot, / Magának foglalja egész világot.” II/5–6.

also reflects ideas concerning the qualities of the ideal Muslim ruler and the “right” practice of faith that were emphasized continuously in Ottoman historiographies. These issues, which reflect on the sultan’s dependence on his viziers, come into view when Barbarossa talks to Suleyman, advising the ruler not only on military issues but also on the correct practice of religion. Furthermore, Barbarossa is not afraid of calling Suleyman’s attention to the obligations of a pious ruler: “I urge you to remember your ancestors, / The dynasty of Ottoman sultans, / Their empires and victories, / And the law of Mohammed. // Take care of the law of your faith, / Take revenge on the enemies of the faith.”³¹

The Ottoman ruler is shown by a series of intertwined representations. In one scene, Barbarossa tries to convince the Tunisians to become Ottoman subjects. Suleyman is introduced from Barbarossa’s perspective to be favorable to the Tunisians—in an interpretation of Giovio, and in the Hungarian translation by Valkai. The description puts the Ottoman emperor in a more favorable light than the Tunisian ruler and reflects the sultan’s abilities concerning universal rule: “They should get to know their present emperor, / Sultan Suleyman, their great lord. // They would be given such a ruler now, / Who sent him to them, / And who would pity their great burdens, / Which is the reason he went there. // Now you should stop your ravaging, / Now that you are fleeing from your cruel king, / A great lord is your ruler henceforth, / Under whose protection you will live calmly. // Be happy for your freedom, / For the sultan who shares your religion.”³² Ending his arguments, Barbarossa summarizes the rights and obligations of tributary status and describes the process of becoming subjects of the sultan: “My only wish of you is the following, / To keep your faith in the sultan, / And be obedient to him, / You will be calm in your freedom this way.”³³

³¹ “Siess megemlékezni eleidről, / Az Otmán császárok nemzetségről, / Birodalmokról és győzelmekről, / És az Mahometnek ő törvényéről. // Viselj gondot te hited törvényéről, / Erős bosszút állj hit ellenségéről.” II/43–44.

³² “Ismernék meg mostani császárokat, / Sultan Szolimánt, hatalmas urokat. // Oly fejedelmek most adatott volna, / kitől ő közükbe küldetett volna, / Rajtok való nagy terhöt bánta volna, / Mely oda menésének oka volna. // Dúlni, fúlni mostan tő meg szűnjetek, / Lám kegyetlen királytól menekedtek, / Hatalmas Úr immár fejedelmek, / Kinek oltalmába megcsendesedtek. // Örüljetek a tő szabadságtoknak, / Veletek egy hiten való császárnak.” III/38–41.

³³ “Az én kívánságom csak ez tőletek, / Császárnak tartsátok meg ti hitetek, / És legyetek neki engedelmesek, / Szabadságtokban így lesztek csendesek.” III/46.

Although the text recounts distant events, the tributary status and its conditions and obligations were well-known issues for the Hungarian audience. In the last strophe, the author admonishes his Hungarian listeners to trust God, who will protect them and their king, in order to avoid the fate of the Tunisians. This addition to the original work parallels the Hungarian situation with that of other countries, creating a complex structure that demands a special manner of recognition and comprehension from the audience. The construction of the text identifies common mental processes, as well as modes of interpreting the tributary status by means of a distant example, and refers to extant ideas regarding universality. Hungarian listeners or readers of Valkai's text could feel both distant from *and* very close to other subjects of the Ottoman Empire. This context-specific effect was unlikely to have been derived only from Valkai's original source and was most probably an innovation of the translator reflecting Hungarian circumstances.

An indispensable author in the analysis of the images of Suleyman is Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, whose collection of works, the *Cronica*,³⁴ is the first edited volume in the history of Hungarian literature. It is dedicated to Ferdinand of Habsburg, and thus, reference to the power relations is evident: Ferdinand is counterposed to the "pagan Turkish emperor."³⁵ The work consists of two main parts: the first is dedicated to descriptions of current sieges, and the second—as the title page states—consists of "events and stories from different countries or different ages," placing the Hungarian events into a wider geographical and cultural context. This part of the volume is particularly important in the study of Hungarian reflections on the sultan as a universal ruler, because it contains translated works recalling Habsburg imperial narratives and discusses internal problems of the Habsburg realm. It introduces practices common to the European discourse concerning various imperial claims for universal rule. An example of this type of discourse is the *Story of the Fight between Emperor Suleyman and Pasha Kazul*.³⁶ The song recounts the conflict between the Kizilbash movement and Suleyman, and

³⁴ The volume was published in 1554 in Kolozsvár, in the Heltai Publishing House's critical edition of his works: RMKT XVI/3, ed. Áron Szilády (Budapest: MTA, 1881).

³⁵ Dedication to Ferdinand, RMKT XVI/3, 4–5.

³⁶ *Szulimán császár Kazul basával viadaljáról*, RMKT XVI/3, 254–62. The name of the pasha (Kazul) is supposedly not a personal name, as the word means "Persian" in early modern Hungarian. The Persian shah at the time of Suleyman's campaign was Tahmasp I.

the context of the killing of Ibrahim Pasha.³⁷ The text testifies to an awareness of Suleyman's claims to universal rule. In addition to his occupation of Buda, he owns "other parts of the world": "I recount now the deeds of Suleyman, / Who has his empire in Buda, / And has great parts of the world all over, / He is the scourge of God in many countries."³⁸ This description not only presents Suleyman as a universal ruler, using practices typical in Western European works; it also refers to ideas circulating in Europe and the Ottoman Empire evoking prophecies of the Book of Daniel. Moreover, mirroring Ottoman and Western European practices, the figure of Alexander is invoked in connection with Suleyman: "In old times it had been prophesied, / That they would see many wonders in the end times, / Pagans would have great power, / Followers of true religion would lose their way. // The great power of Emperor Suleyman / Is not much smaller than the power of Alexander, / Let the great Lord ruin his power, / Help revive Christian people."³⁹ Not unexpectedly, the author of the song applies a combination of "translated traditions" and a "translated imagery."

The need for a strong ruler as a counterweight to the Ottomans was a ubiquitous motif in the European discourse. This demand was even more complicated in Hungary because of the tripartite structure of the kingdom and the power struggles over the newly created political structures. In many cases, a counterpoint to both Habsburgs and Ottomans was needed. Accordingly, this concept created a plethora of variants in Hungarian literature.

Translated sources highlighted Habsburg universal imperial claims, such as in András Valkai's *The Army of Emperor Charles in Africa*,⁴⁰ which presents the Tunis campaign from the perspective of the armies of

³⁷ The same topic appears in Hans Dernschwam's account. Hans Dernschwam, "Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinople und Kleinasien," in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* [Captives, envoys, and merchants about the Ottoman Empire], ed. Lajos Tardy (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977), 227–414, esp. 345–47: Dernschwam claims that the Turks never went against anyone with less enthusiasm than they did against Pasha Kazul.

³⁸ "Én beszéllök Szulimán járásában, / Kinek birodalma vagyon Budában, / És nagy része vagyon mindez világban, / Isten ostroma ő nagy sok országban." Lines 5–8.

³⁹ "Régi időben ezt megprófétáltak, / Utóssó időben csudákat látnak, / nagy hatalmok léssen az pogánoknak, / Nagy bolygások igaz hitben valóknak. // Szultán Szulimán császár nagy hatalma, / Nem sok héján mint bölcs Sándor hatalma, / Az jó isten már hatalmat megrontsa, / Az keresztyén népet már feltámasztja." Lines 269–78.

⁴⁰ This work is also a translation from Giovio. *Károly császár hada Afrikában*, RMKT XVI/9, 151–86.

Charles V. As was clear to the audience, similarly to the Ottoman sultan, his Habsburg rival also sought universal rule. Accordingly, Charles V is presented in the work in opposition to Suleyman. For example, he participates in the military movements personally, unlike the Ottoman ruler, who is depicted as staying away from campaigns in the *Story of Hariadenus*.⁴¹ Charles appears as a great general, the embodiment of the perfect ruler—Valkai does not mention that the victory gave him only temporary superiority. By contrast, in *Hariadenus*, Suleyman is shown as even more distanced from the actual military movements; he is merely apprising the looted goods,⁴² an image far from that of a perfect ruler. The work also emphasizes the religious affiliation of Charles's campaign⁴³—providing a parallel to the *Story of Hariadenus* as it presents the religious motivation of the Ottomans, making Charles the archetypal perfect ruler, the embodiment of the flawless religious and military leader.

Another way in which a foil for the Ottoman sultans is created is by presenting Hungarian rulers as their able opponents. The figure of Matthias Corvinus was consciously introduced as a worthy opponent who symbolized the recently vanished glory and independence of the Kingdom of Hungary. His heroic image was successfully created by his humanist court writers Antonio Bonfini and Galeotto Marzio during his life,⁴⁴ and

⁴¹ "Hope is great with Charles at all times, / Often he ventures forth with the guard, / Encouraging his people with great braveness, / He fears nothing, and is with complete confidence." [Reménség mindenkor nagy az Károllyal, / Gyakran jár ki ő maga is strázsával, / Bízattja népeit nagy bátorsággal, / Semmit nem fél, teljes bizodalommal.] *The Army of Emperor Charles in Africa*, II/13.

⁴² "The ship of Portundus was very beautiful, / In which they put the gifts, / They took it to Constantinople, / Showed them to the Turkish sultan. // Ships, gifts, flags there / were regarded by the sultan looked in his good mood, / He praised all of their deeds, / And gave gifts to envoys." [Igen szép vala Portundus hajója, / Kibe ajándékokat rakták vala, / Konstantinápolyba hogy vitték vala, / Török császárnak bemutatták vala. // Ott hajót, ajándékokat, zászlókat, / Császár jó kedvvel látá mind azokat, / dicsére önekik minden dolgukat, / Követeknek oszta ajándékokat.] I/71–73.

⁴³ The military campaign is presented as a war for the sake of Christendom: "He said that he came to Africa, / To take care of his own dignity, / And the protection of Christian countries, / And the great perdition of pagans." [Sőt azért jött mostan ő Afrikába, / Hogy gondot viselne méltóságára, / Keresztyén országoknak oltalmára, / Pogányoknak lönne nagy romlásokra.] III/52.

⁴⁴ His figure also became popular in Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Czech, German, and Slovak folklore, which all contain elements of his cult. See Ildikó Kríza, *A Mátyás-hagyomány évszázadai* [The centuries of the cult of Matthias] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2007).

Matthias's cult peaked during the Ottoman expansion of the sixteenth century. A very popular example from this period—which appeared in numerous printed versions and was referred to in many other works⁴⁵—the *Story of King Matthias*⁴⁶ was composed first by Ambrus Göröcsöni, and then by Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, who corrected and continued the work of Göröcsöni. There are multiple reasons for the popularity of this work, which appeared eighty years after the death of Matthias. First, as Iván Horváth has noted, an important and counterintuitive change in early modern Hungarian poetry was the revival of oral works and traditions caused by the spread of printing.⁴⁷ Second, the lack of a strong ruler engendered a strong desire for such figures—who had to be found in the past.

The story briefly recounts the history of Hungary and its most important rulers: Attila, St. Stephen, St. Ladislaus, and Sigismund. Matthias Corvinus's figure is constructed to fit into this line. The aim of the story is to belittle Mehmed II, who is depicted as fearing Matthias after being defeated by him: "they [the Turks] do not expect help from Mehmed, as they know well how strongly he fears King Matthias."⁴⁸ The message implies that Matthias is the right person for universal rule. His victory at Jajce and the reactions of the Habsburgs and the Ottomans testify to his abilities as a valid rival to both of them: "Two emperors who own the world admired / the young one who is the most clever king among them / In the first year [of his rule] with his arms / He had beaten both of them with his power."⁴⁹

This song presents Matthias as a capable opponent of the Ottoman sultans, as he is able to resist their aggression and build a dynasty and an empire. As a part of this process, the figure of Alexander as an idealized

⁴⁵ Béla Varjas, "Szombatos énekek" [Sabbatarian songs], in RMKT XVII/5 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1970), 567.

⁴⁶ Ambrus Göröcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, *Mátyás király históriája*, ca. 1567, RMKT XVI/9, 219–359. The work relied on János Thuróczi's and Johannes Sambucus's editions of Bonfini and on one of Nagybankai's other works on the father of Matthias, János Hunyadi. According to Ildikó Kríza, besides the written works, the text also relies strongly on oral traditions, as it centers around a figure popular in oral tradition instead of concentrating on current events.

⁴⁷ Iván Horváth, *Balassi költészete történeti poétikai megközelítésben* [The poetry of Balassi in a historical-poetical perspective] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 197.

⁴⁸ "Segítséget nem várnak Mahumettől, / Mert jól tudják, mint tart Mátyás királytól." IV/54.

⁴⁹ "Ezön csodál világbíró két császár, / Hogy egy ifú közöttök eszös király, / Első esztendéjében ő hadával, / Mindkét császárt megverte hatalmával." IV/71.

emperor appears in connection with the Hunyadi family in the *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*,⁵⁰ where János Hunyadi is compared to him: "With thirty-six thousand, Alexander departed, / Beat the innumerable arms of Darius, / Subdued countries of the East."⁵¹ At the same time, the work draws a parallel between Alexander and Suleyman, a parallel that was part of the Ottoman discourse communicating the public image of the sultan. Reflecting on world empires, the author recounts four great empires in history: the Assyrian, the Persian, the Roman, and the empire of Alexander. However, these world empires have all been surpassed by the Turks: "The Turkish Empire exceeds all these four, / And even the time of their power is longer, / Almost longer than a thousand years."⁵²

The presence of Alexander in the works of numerous Hungarian authors suggests that his life story animated the authors of the period, corresponding to trends outside of Hungary.⁵³ To cite one example, Mátyás Nagybankai refers to Alexander, although in connection not with Suleyman but with Mehmed II. The parallel turns up in a negative context, referring to the self-sufficiency of Mehmed II after the conquest of Constantinople: "He was very happy with the rich gains in Constantinople, / Became conceited, disdainful being so powerful, / He declared himself wise Alexander in the matter of warfare, / And started to think often about Belgrade to himself."⁵⁴

The justification of the Ottoman dynasty's power had been a central issue in the oeuvre of Ottoman historiographers and Western humanists

⁵⁰ János Baranyai Decsi, *Török császárok krónikája*, RMKT XVI/12, ed. Géza Orlovsky, editor of the series Géza Szentmártoni Szabó (Budapest: Balassi, 2004), 505–29.

⁵¹ "Harminchatezer magával Sándor indula / Darius szántalan hadát megverte vala / Napkeleti országokat meghajtott vala." 182.

⁵² "Mind az négy birodalomnál töröké nagyobb, / Még az idei is ő hatalmának nagyobb, / Közel ezer esztendő forgásánál nagyobb." 133.

⁵³ See the work of Péter Ilosvai, *Historia Alexandri Magni*, RMKT XVI/4, ed. Áron Szilády (Budapest: MTA, 1883), 83–172. Mahmud Tercuman's *History of Hungary* (Tarih-i Ungurus) from the 1540s bears the subtitle *Iskendernâme* (Epic of Alexander). See Tijana Krstić, "Of Translation and of Empire: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Imperial Interpreters as Renaissance Go-Betweens," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁵⁴ "Igen öröl vala kazdag nyereségnek az Konstantinápolban, / Elbízta ő magát, el-felfúvokodék nagy hatalmasságában, / Alította ő magát bölcs Alexandernak hadakozás dolgában, / Nándor-Fejrvárat kezdé forgatnia császár gyakran magában." *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról* [The story of the valiant voivode János Hunyadi], RMKT XVI/4, 27–40, lines 309–12.

and was discussed in Hungarian literary works as well. The genealogy of the Ottomans was a major topic in humanist historiographies; various ideas were floated about Ottoman origins that contained confused notions about Turks and Ottomans and sometimes brought the origins of Islam into the concept.⁵⁵

Hungarian poets must have discussed the genealogy of the Ottoman sultans in various works. Traces survive of a separate genre, the sultans' chronicles, discussing genealogies; however, there are no proven connections with Ottoman and humanist historiographies dealing with the same topic. Unfortunately, most examples of this genre have been lost. We know of a lost work of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, as he refers to it in another text, in his *Story of Sigismund*.⁵⁶ In the surviving sources, there are merely a few hints about the genealogy of the sultans. One of them is János Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* from 1597.⁵⁷ The work is aimed at a wider audience and is part of a larger plan to promote the war against the Turks together with a chronicle and orations in Latin.⁵⁸ The main idea is to show all Ottoman sultans as unreliable, cruel rulers.⁵⁹ However, as the beginning of Baranyai Decsi's work is lost, there is no discussion available on the genealogies of the Ottoman dynasty.

In the *Story of Ali Pasha*, the unknown author gives a short description of the genealogy of Suleyman: "the son of the great Suleyman was

⁵⁵ The main humanist theories on the origins of Turks were that they originated from the Trojans, or alternately, that they were complete barbarians. See Anthony F. D'Elia, "Genealogy and the Limits of Panegyric: Turks and Huns in Fifteenth-Century Epithalamia," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 4 (2003): 973–91, and the relevant studies in this volume.

⁵⁶ "How the battle went there, I wrote about this, / In the chronicle of the Turkish sultans." [Viadal ott mint lón bőven megírtam, / A török császárok krónikájokban.] Lines 609–10. RMKT XVI/3, 321–58.

⁵⁷ See note 50 for bibliographical data. The work is a fragment (the beginning is lost; the poem starts with the era of Sigismund and Bayezit) and has two parts: the first recounts the history of the Ottoman Empire, while the second is an exhortation in the spirit of Wittenberg against cooperation with the Turks.

⁵⁸ Opposition to war with the Ottomans was a common sentiment in Transylvania in this period, as promoters of alliance with the Ottomans came to the forefront in Transylvanian politics.

⁵⁹ For instance, on Mehmed II, the text warns: "Note the custom of the treachery of the Turk! / He made alliance with the Venetians, / While from the other side he moved three armies." [Török álnoksága, jegyezd meg, mi szokása! / Velencésekkel ő frigyet kötött vala, / Másfelől három nagy hadat indított vala.] 40.

Selim, / Sultan Azma was the daughter of this one.”⁶⁰ Although not a song, the Latin account of Georgius de Hungaria⁶¹ should also be mentioned; this was one of the most widely disseminated works in Europe that influenced later ideas about the Ottomans. Georgius was in Ottoman captivity between 1438 and 1458, and in his work he refers to the origins of the Ottomans, mentioning Othmanbeg as one of the rival leaders of the Saracens. He also gives an etymology of the name “Ottoman,” arguing that it meant the sons of Othman (Osman). Although well known in Europe, the work has left no traceable influence on Hungarian authors in their ideas about the origins of the Ottomans. Generally, there is a gulf between authors with humanist educations and writers describing current events. For the latter, genealogy seemed to be a minor issue, whereas for writers with a humanist background, genealogy was fundamental when discussing the Ottoman dynasty’s justification of power.

Hungarian Representations—Images of the Conqueror

The images of Suleyman in Hungarian literary discourse depended on the actual political context and on the latest developments of campaigns. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to concentrate on the descriptions of the sultan at some of the milestone events of the Ottoman conquest—in particular, the Battle of Mohács, the capture of Buda, and the siege of Szigetvár. These events functioned as turning points in the literary discourse as well, reporting and reflecting the details of the campaigns.

The most important event at the beginning of Suleyman’s reign was his capture of Belgrade in 1521. Authors dealing with the event saw it as obvious that Suleyman was greater than his ancestors, as he was able to take Belgrade, a fortress of strategic importance. Thus the myth that the town was resistant to Ottoman siege, which even Constantinople believed, had to be dispelled, and authors had to express dismay over the unexpected defeat. Discarding the myth of Belgrade’s invincibility created the context for the future victories of Suleyman (and also for the future

⁶⁰ “Szultán Szulimán fia Zelin vala, / Azma szultán ez és leánya vala.” Ali pasa históriája, RMKT XVI/12, 47–55. In the margin is a note: “[Geneol]olia Im[perat]oris Tur[cicis].”

⁶¹ *Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum* (Urach, 1481).

losses of the Kingdom of Hungary) and justified his reign as being superior to those of his predecessors. The defeat of Belgrade is described in Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* as follows: "Seven times Suleyman came to Hungary, / First he took Belgrade, / Into good Hungary he opened his way."⁶²

Suleyman's next decisive move was to lead his armies to the battle at Mohács. The Hungarian army's catastrophic defeat became a national symbol of loss and was fundamental to the formation of the image of Suleyman, as well as to the self-image of Hungary, for centuries to come. To give a broader view of narrations of the battle, it may be relevant to discuss it from the perspective of the Ottomans and of Western reactions. There are diverse sources describing the battle from the Ottoman point of view. One is the diary of Suleyman—written not by him but supposedly by an official, recorded in third-person singular. It evokes some of the *topoi* surrounding the traditional Ottoman image of the ruler. In a note written two days after the battle, according to the text, the sultan had a golden throne prepared for himself and sat on it like Solomon, echoing the comparison of the sultan to the famous biblical model. Other Ottoman sources, such as reports of victory (*fethnames*) and historiographical works, echo *topoi* connected to the public image of Suleyman in a deeply symbolic language. These documents are composed in high Ottoman style and describe Suleyman as a world conqueror and protector of the faith.⁶³ The sources emphasize the importance of the battle for the sake of a war fought for religious ideals and portray Suleyman as he intended to present his public self.⁶⁴

In sources from Western Europe, news of the battle spread quickly in the form of printed and oral accounts, but most of them contained no detailed references to Suleyman. The work of Paolo Giovio, later widely known in Hungary, briefly recounts Suleyman's preparations for the battle

⁶² "Hét ízben Szulimán Magyarországra jöve, / Nándorfejérvárat és elsőben megvevé, / Jó Magyarországnak utát nyitni ott kezdé." 64. See notes 50 and 57.

⁶³ The most important Ottoman sources regarding the battle are Kemalpasazade's *Mohacname*, the works of Pasha Lutfi, Ferdi, and Mustafa Celalzade. See József Thúry, *Török történetírók* [Turkish history writers] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1893); Tamás Katona, ed., *Mohács emlékezete* [The memory of Mohács] (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1976).

⁶⁴ According to Ferdi, the justification of the battle was clearly religious: "The main thought of his [Suleyman's] glorious mind had always been to demolish idolatry and evil, faithfulness, and heresy." Thúry, *Török történetírók*, vol. 2, 56–74.

and his surprise at the small size of the army the Hungarian king had assembled to face him. Describing events after the battle, Giovio tells of the visit of Suleyman to Buda, where, according to the text, he caused no damage and permitted people to keep their religion.⁶⁵ Generally, Giovio's viewpoint reflects that branch of international historiography that held that Suleyman treated the conquered with benevolence.

Notes of envoys to Constantinople are equally important sources regarding the battle. Antonio Burgio, the papal envoy, reported that the Grand Turk discussed the campaign against Hungary intensely. The envoy also made reference to a Turkish custom in military preparations for the battle. He recounts that it was the habit of the Grand Turk to issue an order on December 1 calling on everyone to prepare for war. However, if a few weeks later, he issued an order to collect taxes, it was considered a sign that there would be no war that year.⁶⁶

Contemporary Hungarian chronicles written in both Latin and Hungarian greatly influenced poetry written later about the battle and the events around it. For example, the description of István Brodarics,⁶⁷ an eyewitness, is the same as that of Görcsöni and Bogáti Fazakas when it describes Suleyman crossing the Sava River and preparing to wage war against Hungary.⁶⁸ In a later chronicle written by Miklós Istvánffy, the sultan is presented as preparing for battle: "he himself will go to the camp in the early spring, according to the customs of his ancestors, to set a campaign against his enemies."⁶⁹ At the beginning of the battle, the sultan is shown to have remained in camp, ignoring the drums and trumpets of the Hungarians that signaled the commencement of the battle. After his victory, as Istvánffy recounts, Suleyman visited the castle in Buda and had

⁶⁵ *Historiarum suo temporis*, 1531.

⁶⁶ The letter of Antonio Giovanni da Burgio to the Pope, Buda, January 18, 1526. *Relationes oratorum pontificorum 1524–1526*. Monumenta Vaticana Historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia, II.1 (Budapest: METEM, 2001).

⁶⁷ *De conflictu Hungarorum cum Turcis ad Mohatz verissima descriptio*, 1527, Krakow.

⁶⁸ "He went against the Hungarians on land and water, / As he had a wide road [open] to the Hungarians. [. . .] The road is open over the Sava, great damage in Srem, / It would be difficult to stand against him." [Földön, vízen csak magyarra indulna, / Magyarokra mert tágas úta volna. [. . .] Száván szabad úta, sok kár Szerémbe, / Nehéz volna már állani ellene.] *Mátyás király históriája*, VIII/26–27.

⁶⁹ *Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis libri XXXIV*, trans. László Juhász, Monumenta Hungarica VI (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1962), 95.

the statue of Hercules moved onto his galleys bound for Constantinople⁷⁰ but did not lay waste to the city. Generally, these sources rely heavily on one another and repeat several episodes word for word.

The chronicles emphasizes the Ottomans' religious motivation for the battle. For example, as György Szerémi reports:

When the sultan of the Turks heard that Hungarians force their churches to pay taxes, he said: They made Jesus Christ, whom they believe to be god and man, their own enemy, and made him stand against them. . . . This is what the emperor of the Turks said: I want to take revenge for Jesus the prophet, because Hungarians caused great offense to Jesus, the son of Mary, whom they call Christ; our prophet Mohammed ordered us to respect him, as he is a prophet and there is no other prophet like him.⁷¹

Suleyman is aware of his role as a scourge of God, and he is ready to fulfill it: this is a brilliant manifestation of the originally biblical argument employed thoroughly by both humanist and Protestant authors that the Ottomans were God's punishment for the sins of humanity. After the siege, as Szerémi continues, "The sultan went to Buda and remained there for sixteen days. Then, he asked his advisors whether he should burn down the castle. And his advisors told him not to, but that he should burn down the town, to let everyone remember that the Turkish sultan was here; and to leave the castle alone because of its central position."⁷²

A different type of source concerning Mohács is the autobiographical account written by Bartholomaeus Georgievits, who was captured after the battle. In his work, he commemorates the event and his capture in connection with his own fate extremely briefly: "A few years after the loss of Alba Regalis [Belgrade], when Suleyman crossed the Danube and had his fortunate battle with Louis, the king of Hungary, at the field of Mohács, and

⁷⁰ Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép. Szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon* [History – Image: Selected examples of the interplay between past and art in Hungary], ed. Árpád Mikó and Katalin Sinkó (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2000) 34–47, esp. 42–46.

⁷¹ *Epistola de perditione Regni Hungarorum*, 1545–47, trans. László Erdélyi and László Juhász, *Monumenta Hungarica V* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1961), 98–106. The citations are my translations from the Hungarian.

⁷² *Ibid.*

succeeded by trick rather than by his military power. . . . I was one of the few captives taken.”⁷³

In narrative poetry, Mohács very soon became a symbol of national loss. Surprisingly, authors did not use this event to create a negative image of Suleyman. His figure is neglected in references to the battle; instead, the accent is on the mourning and the tallying of losses of the kingdom. This attitude continued the traditions of complaint culture that were created by works about the Mongolian invasion and are present in literary texts concerning the Ottoman campaign. The perspective of the defeated was heavily stressed and more detailed, while the viewpoints and personae of the victorious side were neglected.

Works report the death of the young Louis II. Contrary to the chronicles cited above, they relate the burning down of Buda after the battle, but do not emphasize Suleyman's role in the events. An example is Máté Skaricza's *Story of the Castle of Kevi*,⁷⁴ which briefly recounts the battle: “The battle on the field of Mohács, / Caused confusion all over the land. // Everything nice dissolved to naught, / Because of the death of King Louis, / What remained were only the cries of the country, / And the ruins of the beautiful town of Buda.”⁷⁵

Poetry recounted the battle for political purposes. Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* argued that the reason the battle was lost before it had begun was that the young king had thought about only dances and songs.⁷⁶ In the work, the battle itself is not described in detail; only its results are given: “But our ears were opened by the Turks, / Because our nation was defeated by them with a second strike, / Our land was lost together with our young king.”⁷⁷ Here again, the imperial visit to Buda records that Suleyman ordered the town to be pillaged and razed. The author reflects upon the losses and exaggerates as a rhetorical tool against the Turks.

⁷³ Bartholomaeus Georgievits [Bertalan Georgievits], *De ritibus et differentiis Graecorum et Armeniorum* (Leuven), trans. Lajos Tardy, in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok*, (1977), 182.

⁷⁴ 1581, RMKT XVI/11, ed. Pál Ács (Budapest: Akadémiai-Orex, 1999), 239–48.

⁷⁵ “Az ütközet a Mohácsi mezőn, / Bódulást tón mind az egész földön. // Bomlása lőn minden szép rakásnak, / Mert halála lőn Lajos királynak, / Csak helye lőn ország siralmának, / Pusztán állá vára is Budának.” Lines 259–65.

⁷⁶ *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, str. 66.

⁷⁷ “De az török által nyitá mi fülünket, / Mert másod csapással megveré mi népünket, / Ifjú királyunkkal elveszté mi földünket.” 67.

After Mohács, the Ottomans gradually took further parts of the country by military campaigns. This period corresponds with the flourishing of various genres of narrative poetry, as the main means of spreading news was orally performed report songs and their printed versions. A significant step toward the total conquest of the Kingdom of Hungary was Suleyman's occupation of Buda in 1541, which was recounted with disparate emphases in different literary works. The change in the town's status from a capital to a marginal part of the Ottoman Empire was seen as deeply regrettable, especially after the consolidation of Ottoman power in the former capital.⁷⁸

The first and most extensive piece of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos's *Cronica*, the *Story of Transylvania*, recounts events after the Battle of Mohács and the advance of the Ottoman army towards Buda, focusing on the story of György Martinuzzi and his attempt to gain power by promising to protect the orphaned King Johannes and his mother Isabella. As is claimed, the queen herself wrote a letter to Suleyman asking for his protection.⁷⁹ As a result, Suleyman sent a large army to Buda to protect the country and the infant king. Protection was a central element in references to tributary status and was widely propagated by Ottoman historians. Tinódi refers to this function in several places,⁸⁰ and other authors also employed the notion of protection in connection with Suleyman, but often in an ironic tone. Demeter Csanádi's work on the life of Johannes II of Hungary⁸¹ cites the fall of Buda, evoking the fable of the wolf and the lamb: "The sultan asked from the queen there, / To bring her son to the

⁷⁸ The event was referred to in Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos's *Cronica* as follows: "Buda had been the capital of Hungary, / Who fell into the hands of the Turkish sultan, / Now it is a border castle of Turkey." [Buda vala feje Magyarországnak, / Ki kezében esék terek császárnak: / Most végháza ím az Terekországnak.] *Varkucs Tamás idejébe lött csaták Egerből* [Events in Eger in the era of captain Tamás Varkucs], lines 9–11.

⁷⁹ "The queen annoyed him this way, / Wrote a letter to Emperor Suleyman." [Az királyné azzal háborítá / Szulimán császárnak nagy sirtában írta.] *Erdélyi história* [The story of Transylvania], Lines I/55–56.

⁸⁰ "I kept peace and protected his land" [Békével tartottam, oltalmaztam országát], I/368; "You know how I swore to King Johannes, / Under the town of Buda, I swore to his son, / That I would save his country from all enemies, / I would protect him and keep him alive as my own son." [Az János királynak tudod min esködtem, / Fiának es Buda alatt úgy esködtem, / Minden ellenségtől országit megmentem, / Mint egy fiamat oltalmazom, éltetem.] Lines III/921–24.

⁸¹ *Vita Joannis Secundi*, 1571, RMKT XVI/8, ed. Lajos Dézsi (Budapest: MTA, 1930), 213–19.

camp to see him, / He offered his protection like the wolf to the lamb, / He made this clear as he obtained Buda.”⁸² In Göröcsöni’s and Bogáti Fazakas’s *Story of King Matthias*, Suleyman is again portrayed as claiming to be a protector of the country: “He would strengthen his empire with those [countries of the Serbs and Hungarians], / No one would oppose him in this matter, / The prince of Hungarians was a child / Everything swirled in great unevenness.”⁸³ János Baranyai Decsi, a keen collector of proverbs and sayings, applied the metaphor of the fowler, taken from a proverb, while describing the sultan’s protectorate over Buda: “As the good fowler captures birds with his whistle, / This is the way Suleyman left Buda to Johannes, / He knows well that things might go, but would not pass away.”⁸⁴ These fragments demonstrate that the central notion in the justification of Ottoman expansion, protection, was communicated by the Ottoman administration successfully and was used by authors of the tributary states to express their opinions towards Ottoman power.

Further campaigns of Suleyman are often described by recurring, formulaic fragments⁸⁵ in Hungarian event poetry. Although the sultan is implicitly a protagonist of many of the poems, references to him in these texts offer few personal features.⁸⁶ Instead, he is presented as a person who

⁸² “Királnétül az császár ottan azt kíváná, / Fiát táborba hozza, kiküldené, látná, / Oltalmát, mint az farkas báránynak, ajánlá, / Megmutatá, mert Budát kezéhez kapcsolá.” Lines 69–72.

⁸³ “Császárságát avval erősítené, / Ebben senki ellene nem tehetne, / Gyermek volna magyarok fejedelme, / Kavarog mind nagy egyenetlenségbe.” VIII/20.

⁸⁴ “Mint az jó madarász madarat sípval fogja, / Így Szulimán akkor Budát Jánosnál hagyja, / Azmi halad, nem szokott elmúlni, jól tudja.” *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, 74.

⁸⁵ Oral presentation of the works involved the use of formulas, a set of which was part of the toolkit of oral culture and was available to authors and known to the audience. Walter J. Ong, “Oral Memory, the Story Line and Characterization,” in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Methuen & Co., 1982), 139–55. An example from Tinódi: “As the castle of Buda became the property of Sultan Suleyman, / He took many beautiful fortresses besides.” [Buda vára hogy lón Szulimán császáré, / Sok szép kővárakat vétete az mellé.] *Szegedi veszedelem* [The siege of Szeged], lines 9–10. In this text, see László Jankovits, “A szóbeli kultúra és a *Cantio de militibus pulchra*” [Oral culture and the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*], in *Hazugok, fecsegők, álmodozók: tanulmányok a régi magyar költészetéről* [Liars, gossipers, dreamers: Studies on old Hungarian poetry] (Budapest: Balassi, 2006), 44.

⁸⁶ A rare case where he is depicted more personally is while reacting to the letter of the French king that tells about the conspiracy of Martinuzzi: “The sultan heard this and nodded his head, / He was astonished while thinking about this.” [Császár hallá feje hajtogatásával, / Csak elálmélkodék sok gondolkodásával.] Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, *Erdélyi história*, lines I/351–52.

applies effective strategy with political motivations. In Görcsöni's and Bogáti Fazakas's *Story of King Matthias*, he is referred to as a determined leader of military maneuvers, with profound religious convictions: "He assumed that if he could conquer Hungarians, / He would build mosques in Buda and Rome, / He would order the practice of his Turkish religion everywhere."⁸⁷ This presentation corresponds with the Ottoman and European writings on the first half of Suleyman's reign: his motivations for conquest were justified by religious reasons and aspirations toward universal rule.

In descriptions of Suleyman's campaigns, the sultan himself is rarely present on the battlefield. Nonetheless, his figure provides a frame: poems describing sieges are built from recurring, formulaic elements, each recounting an action or event during the siege. Such building blocks are the enumeration of the armies before the siege; speeches of military leaders; shouting "Jesus!" and "Allah!" at the beginning of the struggle; tallying the casualties; descriptions of the sorrow of the widows, and so on. Consequently, in many cases the structure of these songs is parallel. The audience expected and relied on this script, and participated in the "game" played by the repetition of the structure, where the novelty of structure was not as important as a reliable and generic framework that could be filled with novel elements such as news about the individual campaigns. The audience was interested in up-to-date information and relied on a recognizable and conventional form.

The sultan was also part of this script, as his orders for the steps to be taken in the sieges were always part of the strict structure. One example appears in the *Story of Ali Pasha of Buda*: "This was the order of the sultan: / While Ahmet was under Temesvár, / Ali Pasha would go against Upper Hungary."⁸⁸ The sultan is forever part of the script, a symbolic figure, distanced from the military campaigns but forever present as an abstract authority.

⁸⁷ "Azt szánta, ha magyart hozzá hajthatja, / Budán, Rómában mecsetet rakatna, / Török hitet mindenütt vallattatna, / Jeruzsálemre szándoka azon volna." VIII/28.

⁸⁸ "Ez parancsolása vala az császárnak: / Míg alatta lenne Amhát Temesvárnak, / Addig Ali basa felföld tartománnak." Tinódi, *Budai Ali basa históriája* [The story of Ali Pasha of Buda], lines 5–7. Another example from Tinódi: "The Turkish sultan heard of the strength of the Germans, / He ordered his own forces to get ready." [Terek császár hallá némötnök erejét, / Hamar készítetté az ő nagy erejét.] Tinódi, *Buda veszeséről és Török Bálint fogságáról* [On the loss of Buda and the capture of Bálint Török], lines 21–24.

There are certain other recurring elements that are used as *topoi* in siege descriptions, functioning consistently as parts of the script. Such a *topos* is the unreliability of the Ottomans and their sultan,⁸⁹ which was commonly referred to outside of poetry as well.⁹⁰ A recurring accusation was that the Ottomans made false promises that convinced the vanquished defenders to give up the fortresses. The figure of the sultan often turned up in these episodes, as in the *Story about the Siege of Eger*, where he is referred to in the claim: "I also swear by my faith to you, / That I will gain all kinds of benefits for you from the emperor."⁹¹ The false promise is often followed by a threat in the script, also in the name of the sultan: "Because in those castles that are besieged by the emperor, / If they are occupied, everyone is ordered to be cut down."⁹² Thus, as was shown, the figure of the sultan was of crucial importance in the structure of the script, even if in most cases he remained a symbolic figure, remote from the actual events.

References to the sultan's emotions serve to present him as the ultimate trope of abstract and symbolic power. Although the sultan often expresses his feelings, these are positive or negative emotions mainly connected to the results of military movements and have nothing to do with his personal sensibilities.

⁸⁹ An example: "The sultan strictly ordered the pasha, / To write confident and nice words to the Hungarian lords, / First of all, to good Bálint Terek, / Recommend yourself to him by nice words and gifts." [Igen parancsolá császár az basának, / Hitöt, szép szót írta az magyar uraknak, / Jelösbén mindennél jó Terek Bálintnak, / Szóval, ajándékval magad ajáld annak.] Tinódi, *Buda veszéséről és Török Bálint fogságáról*, lines 25–26.

⁹⁰ János Baranyai Decsi, in his history of Hungary, refers to a Habsburg envoy who reported of Süleyman: "The sultan is lazy, wastes all his time on women, bargains with his provinces; fights his wars only for the plunder, and he has lost all his forces and money, and his people hate him." Later in the same work, there is a generalization of this feature to all of the Ottomans: it is the habit of Turcic people to make false friendships and oaths; this is the way the Ottoman gained power—through aggression and tricks. See chapters II/6 and III/10 in *Baranyai Decsi János magyar históriája (1592–1598)* [The Hungarian history of János Baranyai Decsi], trans. Péter Kulcsár (Budapest: Európa-Helikon, 1982).

⁹¹ "Én es hitemre fogadok ti néktök, / Az császártul minden jót nyerök néktök." Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, lines I/414–15.

⁹² "Mert császár mely várat megszálltat, / Azt megveszi, mindent ott levágattat." Lines 949–50.

After *Szabács viadala* (The siege of Szabács),⁹³ the earliest, fifteenth-century example of event poetry, the often-recurring emotion of annoyance (*bosszúság*) is frequently mentioned in Hungarian literature referring to the sultans. The other reported emotion is the sultan's sorrow (*búsulás*), which seems to have had two meanings in early modern Hungarian. The first meaning of the word, sadness, is the one it still has today; the other meaning, anger, is no longer current. These two emotions are presented as motivating the sultan in his campaigns. A typical example from Tinódi's *Cronica* reads: "Now I turn my speech to Turkey, / What the sultan's deeds were there in his great sorrow."⁹⁴

When the sultan is depicted as angry, he is traditionally described as tearing his own facial hair.⁹⁵ As the beard is a symbol of dignity, its loss denotes a lack of dignity in both the military and moral sense. Fear of disgrace is, in all cases, described as a motivating force of the Ottomans for military campaigns. Descriptions of the sultan's anger and his fear of dishonor can be found in the works of Göröcsöni and Bogáti Fazakas on Matthias Corvinus: "The sultan became very sad hearing this, / He had the fortress besieged night and day [...] Let me be more ashamed than my father

⁹³ "They all heard about this in the country of Turks / The Turkish sultan was greatly angered." [Ezt meghallák mind Törökországba / Török császár lőn nagy bosszúságban.] RMKT XVI/1, ed. Cyrill Horváth (Budapest: MTA, 1921), lines 149–50.

⁹⁴ "Téritöm beszédöm az Terekországba, / Mit császár mívele ő nagy búsultában." Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, lines II/898–99. The following lines, that is, the first lines of part III of the poem, repeat the meaning of the previously quoted text, creating coherence between the two parts of the work: "I will recount the great anger of Sultan Süleyman." [Szolimán császárnak mondom nagy haragját.] Line III/901. This fragment helps to reconstruct the original meaning of the word *búsul*, as there is reference to anger in the second quote.

⁹⁵ "They say he tore his own beautiful moustache." [Az ő szép bajuszját mondják hogy szaggatta.] Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, line III/913. This motif is present in Mátyás Nagybánkai's *Story of János Hunyadi*, at the description of Sultan Murat's reactions after being defeated by János Hunyadi at Belgrade: "The sultan became sad, grabbed his own beard and made a strong oath, / And told the pashas: 'I will not tolerate losses and damages, / In fifteen days I will either die here or take the fortress, / even if I lose all of my people, I will make it mine, / Because it is better for me to die here than than go home without it for my dishonor.'" [Császár megbúsula, szakálát megfogá, erősen megeskövék. // Szóla az basáknak: "Az kárt, kissebbséget bizon el nem szenvedem, / Tizenötöd napig vagy én itt meghalok, vagy az várat megveszem, / Ha minden népemet alatta elvesztem, mégis enyimmé teszem, / Mert jobb itt meghalnom, hogy nem szégyenemre annákul haza mennem."] *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról*, lines 368–72.

/ If I will besiege this more than fifteen days.”⁹⁶ In his *Story of János Hunyadi*, Mátyás Nagybánkai also applies this *topos*, although in connection with Sultan Murat: “When Sultan Amurates saw the menace of his people / Sorrow and fear, truly great dread inhabited his heart / Because of disgrace, he turned his people to his land / For which in Fehérvár, they praised the name of God.”⁹⁷ In both citations, the ruler’s emotions are depicted as reflections on the progress of the military maneuvers. The main driving force of the campaign is to avoid dishonor.

Positive emotions are also presented in the poems. They function as motivations for military movements: the aim of the campaigns is to please the sultan.⁹⁸ Depictions of the sultan’s positive and negative emotions as they appear in event poetry are not connected with the persona presented during the campaigns. Instead, these depictions should be regarded as formulaic, denoting the sultan’s changing moods as a symbolic need to be satisfied.⁹⁹ Suleyman appears in event poetry on the highest level of the military and social hierarchy, an ultimate will that governs the deeds of the Ottomans even in his absence. This was clear for Hungarian authors and also for the audience of narrative poetry, and this kind of representation might have served special aims in Hungarian texts. The recurring reference to the sultan as an ultimate will was consciously created to demonstrate the dependence of the Ottomans on their ruler, that they were not able to act without keeping the sultan in their minds. Furthermore, this construction might also have reminded the Hungarians of the Ottomans’ belief that

⁹⁶ “Azon császár oly igen búszult vala, / Éjjel-nappal várat töreti vala [...] Valljak szégyent nagyobbát én atyámnál, / Ha ezt vívom tovább tizenöt napnál.” II/40–42.

⁹⁷ “Mikor látta volna Amurátes császár népének veszedelmét, / Bánat és félelem, csuda nagy rettegés foglalá császár szívét, / Szégyen vallására megtéríté azért esmét földébe népét, / kiért Fehérvárban oly igen dicsérek az úristennek nevét.” *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról*, lines 69–73.

⁹⁸ A few illustrations: “[Suleyman] Gave great thanks and made everyone shout ‘Allah,’ / He showed his joyful mood to the pashas.” [Nagy hálákat ada Allát kiáltata, / Az ő basáihoz vig kedvet mutata.] Tinódi, *On the Capture of Bálint Török*, lines 119–20. “The sultan regarded Barbarossa with a joyous mood, / Was grateful for all the gifts.” [Császár látá Barbarossát vig kedvvel, / Ajándékít vevé igen jó névvel.] Valkai, *The Story of Hariadenus*, II/22.

⁹⁹ There seems to be a continuity in this tradition since the fifteenth century. One of the earliest vernacular narrative poems, the *Szabács viadala*, says: “Because they realized they could not obtain it / Moreover, they could not write it to the sultan.” [Mert esmérék hogy meg nem bírhatják / Sőt császárnak azt meg sem írhatják.] *Szabács viadala*, lines 111–12.

they were fulfilling both a religious and a worldly mission of conquest at the behest of their sultan.

The last episode in Suleyman's life was the siege of Szigetvár (1566), where the Ottoman ruler died. The sultan's old age and death had been discussed in all types of Ottoman literary¹⁰⁰ and artistic¹⁰¹ works, and the last campaign of Suleyman was intensely reflected in the European public sphere as well.¹⁰² As in the case of Mohács, Hungarian chronicles about the Battle of Szigetvár became profoundly influential for the oeuvre of later authors. Miklós Istvánffy's¹⁰³ work refers to the actions of Suleyman in a neutral manner, depicting him as leading the siege; there is no reference to his age or illness. The sultan is depicted as active and in command.¹⁰⁴ His illness and death are reported in one short sentence.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ In Ottoman literature, the death of Suleyman was mourned by court poets working under the patronage of the sultan. The best-known example of a grief poem was composed by Bakı, involving traditional Sufi imagery (strong and rich symbolism, involving, e.g. floral symbols); accenting the sultan's elegance, beauty, and dignity, and drawing parallels between his rule and that of Alexander and Darius. Andrews, "Literary Art of the Golden Age," 390.

¹⁰¹ In Ottoman art, the most important artist towards the end of Suleyman's life was Osman, who illustrated the events at the siege of the Szigetvár campaign in the *Tarih-i Sultan Süleyman* (1579/80). In these images, Suleyman was depicted as an old and pious man (with a sallow complexion and lined face), praying in the mausoleum of Eyub Ensari in Istanbul before the Szigetvár campaign. Atil, "The Image of Suleyman in Ottoman Art," 376. Painter Nigari's portrait of Suleyman also shows him in his old age, strolling in the garden, lost in thought, reflecting the mystical nature of Suleyman and his closeness to dervishes and divan poetry. Ibid., 367.

¹⁰² For Western writers and envoys, it was obvious that the sultan was ill (see Fisher, "The Life and Family of Suleyman I," 15). However, some, such as Ghiselin Busbecq, reported him to be in good health: "He is beginning to feel the weight of years, but his dignity of demeanour and his general physical appearance are worthy of the ruler of so vast an empire. [...] He is a strict guardian of his religion and its ceremonies [...] For his age—he has almost reached his sixtieth year—he enjoys quite good health." *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin Le Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 65.

¹⁰³ Sándor Iván Kovács, "Szigetvár veszedelmei a magyar irodalomban" [The sieges of Szigetvár in Hungarian literature], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 117, no. 2 (2004): 613–35.

¹⁰⁴ Miklós Istvánffy's original Latin text was translated into Hungarian by Pál Tályai at the beginning of the seventeenth century and was published in 1622. Miklós Istvánffy, *Szigetvár ostroma* [The siege of Szigetvár], in Pál Tályai's translation from the seventeenth century, ed. Péter Benits, *Irodalomismeret* 10, no. 1–2 (1999): 159–75, <http://www.c3.hu/~iris/99-1/benits.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ "Ennek az viadalnak kimenetele alatt, Szulimán betegségtől s vénségtől is megnehezédvén, s megveszett első szárcsontjának fájdalmához hasa folyása is rája érkezvén

In Hungarian poetry, the initially successful defense of Szigetvár and the defenders' heroic last stand gradually became a point of reference and a national myth, comparable with the Battle of Mohács in its significance in collective memory. From the earliest sources onwards, the deaths of both Captain Miklós Zrínyi and Suleyman formed counterpoints and were used to emphasize the difference between the two leaders.

One of the earliest compositions about the siege, the anonymous *Story of the Loss of Szigetvár*,¹⁰⁶ begins—ingeniously—by stating that Suleyman has died during the siege.¹⁰⁷ Suleyman's advanced age is emphasized repeatedly. It was his old age that inspired him to attack Sziget: "The emperor had the thought / In his old age that he would show himself, / Earn fame for his country, / Spill the blood of many Christians."¹⁰⁸ These lines also follow the pattern of presenting the Ottomans as eager to increase their own glory out of pride and selfishness.

During the description of the siege, other patterns of event poetry emerge concerning the sultan. Suleyman is "sorrowful" over the failure of repeated siege attempts: "The Turkish sultan was very sad about this, / He pulled mightily on his old beard, / That he saw the innumerable loss of his people, / And regretted the death of pashas and beys."¹⁰⁹ In this scene, Suleyman is presented as a pathetic figure, clearly inferior to Zrínyi, the heroic defender. Furthermore, after the sixth unsuccessful attempt to take Sziget, the Ottoman army was under great pressure because of the fear of failure: "The sadness of the whole camp was great, / As the sultan had to become dishonored."¹¹⁰ The illness of Suleyman is also explained by the

meghala." [As this stage of the siege proceeded, Suleyman, encumbered by illness and old age, the pain in his shin bone compounded by the flux of his bowels, died.] XXIII/32.

¹⁰⁶ RMKT XVI/7, ed. Áron Szilády (Budapest: MTA, 1912), 300–311. Although it is an important source, composed shortly after the siege (1566) the author is not correctly informed about all of the events: He claims that Zrínyi was not present at the final siege, and he is aware of only nine attempts, not ten—he probably fled before the last one. See also Kovács, "Szigetvár veszedelmei a magyar irodalomban," 619.

¹⁰⁷ "Let us remember now our great menace, / Things that occurred in our country not long ago, / The corruption and taking of Sziget, / The death of Sultan Suleyman." [Emléközzünk mi nagy veszedelmünkről, / Országunkban nem régen lőtt dolgokról, / Sziget romlásáról és vevésséről, / Szoltán Szolimán császárnak haláláról.] 1.

¹⁰⁸ "Vala császárnak ilyen gondolatja, / Vénségére hogy magát megmutassa, / Az ő országát hogy megöregbítse, / Sok keresztyéneknek vérét kiontsa." 3.

¹⁰⁹ "Ezen török császár megbúsúla, / Vén szakálát erőssen vonogatja, / Népének szántalan kárát hogy látja, / Basáknak, békőknek halálát szánja." 18.

¹¹⁰ "Vala bánatja az egész tábornak, / Hogy szégyönvallása lőn az császárnak." 27.

misfortune: "The vezier pasha died at the seventh siege, / That the sultan regretted more than all those before, / So deeply that he fell ill."¹¹¹ The text's dramatic power builds by increasing the tension generated by the Ottomans' failed siege attempts. After the seventh unsuccessful attempt, the tensions reach their peak and Suleyman dies of "sorrow" (or fury): "The emperor grew so sad about this, / That he saw countless losses of his army, / That he offered himself to Allah, / And on the third day, Suleyman died. // They say he died in his sorrow, / He did not let anyone in for himself."¹¹² The narration of the events shows parallels with the chronicle of Istvánffy: the Ottoman elite tried to keep the news about the sultan secret, but two days later, when the pashas also saw him dead, his passing became widely known. Suleyman is not mentioned anymore in the story; the narration focuses on the heroism of the defenders.

In this text, the death of Suleyman is used as a literary tool to raise tension. The work mirrors several practices discussed previously in depicting the sultan. Suleyman's fear of dishonor and his annoyance are commonly mentioned in narrative poetry. In other works, the death of Suleyman is recounted briefly, but it is always emphasized that he died in the siege of Sziget, contributing significantly to that event's development into a national symbol of heroism. In an anonymous 1571 work on the death of György Turi,¹¹³ the siege is summarized in a neutral manner; the death of the sultan is reported as a smaller detail in a larger narrative focusing on other fights and raids in the county of Zala.¹¹⁴ János Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* also reports Suleyman's death very briefly: "It was the seventh time the sultan came to Sziget, / He got Sziget, and also got Gyula, / He plundered our land, himself was taken by God

¹¹¹ "Vezérbasa heted ustromon hala, / Kit az császár möntül inkább bán vala. // Ugy annyira hogy megbetegült vala." 29–30.

¹¹² "Ezön az császár igön megbúsula, / Számtalan kárát hadának hogy látja, / Az Allának önnön magát ajánlja, / Harmad napra Szulimán császár meghala. // Mondják, hogy bánatjában megholt vala, / Sönkit hozzá be nem bocsátott vala." 36–37.

¹¹³ RMKT XVI/8, 200–212.

¹¹⁴ "Meanwhile, the armies of the Turkish sultan, / Went against good Zrínyi at Szigetvár, / He fought and besieged it night and day, / Until he got it into his power. // The sultan died under the fortress, / And Sziget was now in pagan hands, / The beylerbey let there plunder, / Many pagans, whose number was countless." [Ezenközben török császár nagy hada / Jó Zrínyire Szigetváratt rászálla; / Éjjel-nappal vítatá, ostromlatá, / Mindaddig míg hatalmába nem hajtá. // Az vár alatt császár hogy meghalt vala / És immár Sziget pogánykézbe vala, / Beglerbék rablani bocsátott vala / Nagy sok pogányt, kinek száma nem vala.] Lines 361–68.

there.”¹¹⁵ Thus the death of Suleyman in the siege was certain to have been a major reason for contemporaries’ increased interest. Singers and authors of report songs played an important role in the spread of the cult not only in Hungarian but in a number of other languages and literatures.¹¹⁶

To conclude, the consciously created and managed public image of Suleyman the Magnificent as a universal ruler that was constructed for Ottoman and European audiences via intensive programs (artistic patronage, historiography, and public events) and military campaigns left a clear trace in Hungarian literature of the period. Different roles were connected to the figure of the sultan in different contexts. In the Ottoman context, his programs and campaigns reflected changes of governance along with the desired image. The first period of personal leadership, with the sultan’s active military involvement, was followed by an era with a more abstract image of the sultan as a balance of forces. In a Europe-wide context, his ambitions for universal rule were emphasized, as he was a rival of other, European dynasties. In religious discourses, he was depicted as the scourge of God; his figure was often referred to in connection with biblical prophecies about the end times. These discourses also appeared in contemporary Hungarian literary production: in the Hungarian context, translated works reflected the above discourses more intensely, but they added their own views while adapting the original works for a Hungarian audience.

At the same time, there was a new practice evolving in Hungary: works narrating ongoing Ottoman campaigns mediated a novel symbolic public image of Suleyman. In descriptions of decisive sieges and battles, his emotions and orders were part of a script. *Topoi* connected to the representations of Ottomans in general, such as unreliability, were also reflected in connection with the sultan. The role of the sultan as a protector

¹¹⁵ “Heted ízben török császár Szigetre jöve, / Szigetet megvevé, Gyulát is megvéteté, / Földünket rablatá, magát Isten ott veszté.” *Török császárok krónikája*, 85.

¹¹⁶ Ottoman, German, Croatian, French, Spanish, and English publications dealt with the event. Tibor Klaniczay, *Zrínyi Miklós* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1964), 59–60. The most important non-Hungarian texts that deal with the event are other sources: Franjo Crnko’s 1568 account of the siege (trans. into Latin by Sámuel Budina); the work known as the “Zrínyi album” (*De Zigaretto, Hungariae propugnaculo*) (Wittenberg, 1587) in Latin, which was compiled by Imre Forgách; an epic poem by Christian Schesaeus; Brno Karnarutic’s *Vazetye Sigetta grada* (Venice, 1584); and Miklós Zrínyi’s *Obsidio Szigetiana* (Vienna, 1651) and its Croatian version by Petar Zrinski (Venice, 1660). See Kovács, “Szigetvár veszedelmei.”

of tributary states was also emphasized in Hungarian works, drawing parallels between Hungary and other countries with similar fates. These works paid little attention to the personality of the sultan and conveyed the image of a distant ruler who was referenced as the source of events, the ultimate will. These depictions determined later practices of presenting the Ottomans and their sultan in Hungarian literature.

The role of orality is indispensable in the formation of the specific Hungarian vernacular practice of presenting the sultan. A great variety of uses and reuses of the form and content of oral texts and traditions, such as repetition, can be observed in these works on various levels. The means of depicting the sultan, such as formulas, *topoi*, and script, bear characteristics of oral literature. The effects of literature on the audience and their expectations also operate in these texts on the basis of features of oral literature: the audience relies on and expects a known and repetitive structure during the reception of the texts. Conversely, the expectations of the audience, which themselves work to form literature, also provide insight into the mechanisms of oral cultures.

At the same time, patterns of presenting the sultan shed light on the practices of the formation and uses of a literature that was developing its own rules in writing. The presented texts bear certain characteristics of oral traditions; however, most of their features are inevitably connected to literary traditions, such as their synthetic constructional elements or their placement in an edited volume with various other texts. These new features required a new type of reception that could be realized in individual, silent reading. Thus the same work could be received in two ways: by reading it out loud in a performance or by reading it alone in an edited volume. Both ways required completely different skills and practices from the reader. Furthermore, the resulting, mixed oral-literate parlance became influential in the development of vernacular literature. The practices sketched above had a canon-creating value, and they formed the basis of the later development of Hungarian literary/literate tradition.

Early Hungarian literary practice created a figure of Suleyman that reflected both Ottoman and European patterns of depictions. In the meantime, a particular representational practice evolved that facilitated the development of a new literary language.

Repercussions of a Murder:

The Death of Sehzade Mustafa on the Early Modern English Stage

SEDA ERKOÇ

Owing to the economic boom of the sixteenth century, the Mediterranean, and the Ottoman Empire in particular, occupied a central place in the consciousness of the English, who encountered Mediterranean civilization primarily through commerce. The English were interested in all aspects of the lives of people living in that world, far away and of uncertain geography. They were particularly eager to learn about the Ottomans, as the “Turke” was not just an exotic Other but also a commercial partner, as well as a threat encroaching more by the day. In the sixteenth century alone, more than 3,000 works dealing with the Ottomans were published in Europe that included official reports and records; private letters of diplomats and ambassadors; travel accounts of pilgrims, adventurers, and tradesmen; and even accounts of Christian slaves.¹ Therefore it is not unusual that the news of Sehzade Mustafa’s death reached Europe first by way of rumor.²

¹ Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama 1579–1624* (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing, 2005), 22.

² Note on transliteration: In referring to Ottoman historical figures, this essay uses the Romanized version of their names as found in Stanford Show’s *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*: Murad, Suleyman, Selim, Hurrem, Mustafa, Bayazid, Rüstem, Ahmed. In referring to the characters in the narrative accounts and plays, the names given by the particular writer are used (set in italics on first mention): In Moffan’s *The Horrible Act of Sultan Solyman*: Mustapha (Mustafa), Soliman (Suleyman), Rustanus (Rüstem), Rosa (Hurrem), Acmat (Ahmed).

In Busbecq’s *Turkish Letters*: Mustapha (Mustafa), Soleiman (Suleyman), Roostem (Rüstem), Roxolana (Hurrem).

In 1553, Sehzade Mustafa, the eldest son of Suleyman the Magnificent and the supposed heir to the throne, was strangled by order of his father. Later, his story was recorded by contemporary chroniclers, and many Turkish mourning poems were dedicated to him. Later, in 1555, Nicolas à Moffan's text, *Soltani Solymanni Turcorum Imperatoris horrendum facinus*. . . , appeared and reverberated throughout Europe.³ When Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's four well-known letters were published in 1581, making the story of Mustafa available in Latin and the vernacular, his fate attracted even more attention.⁴ Between the mid-sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century, the "Suleyman-Mustafa story" became one of the most intriguing topics about the Ottomans.⁵ Three plays based on the story were written in England alone.⁶

A brief chronology of modern scholarship regarding the event could aid in understanding the development and direction of the relevant research. Louis Wann's "The Orient in Elizabethan Drama" (1915) marks the beginning of research on the representation of the Eastern Other in early modern English literature.⁷ Wann, with his detailed chart of English plays dealing with the "Orient," establishes the parameters of studies in the field. Samuel Chew's great work, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and Britain during the Renaissance* (1926), stands as one of the basic reference books in the field.⁸ Important as a general overview of the English Renaissance

In *Solymannidae*: Mustapha (Mustafa), Suleiman (Suleyman), Roxanes (Rüstem), Rhode (Hurrem), Achmat (Ahmed). In Greville's *Mustapha*: Mustapha (Mustafa), Soliman (Suleyman), Rosten (Rüstem), Rossa (Hurrem), Achmat (Ahmed).

³ Nicolas à Moffan, *Soltani Solymanni Turcorum Imperatoris horrendum facinus, scelerato in proprium filium, natu maximum, Soltanum Mustapham, parricidio, anno domini 1553 patratum* [The horrible act of Sultan Solymen, Emperor of the Turks, and the wicked murder of his son Sultan Mustapha] (Paris, 1555).

⁴ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *Turkish Letters* (Oxford, Sickle Moon Books, 2001).

⁵ Histories: Thomas Newton, *A Notable History of Saracens* (1575); Richard Knolles, *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603); William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure* (1567). French plays: Gabriel Bounin, *La Soltane* (1561); Georges Thillois, *Solyman II Quatorziesme Empereur des Turcs* (1617); Jean Mairet, *Le Grand et Dernier Solyman ou la Mort de Mustapha* (1639); Charles von Dalibray, *Le Solyman* (1637).

⁶ The anonymous Cambridge play *Solymannidae*, Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, and Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha, the Son of Solyman the Magnificent*. A later one, David Mallet's *Mustapha* (1739), should also be mentioned here.

⁷ Louis Wann, "The Orient in Elizabethan Drama," *Modern Philology* 12, no. 7 (January 1915): 423–47.

⁸ Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937).

literature dealing with Islam, this book focuses on the presence of Muslims in English literature, the connections between East and West, and Western sources of information about Islam.

The second wave of researchers paid attention mostly to the nature of representation rather than to the frequency with which the Turk appeared in English literature. Suheylyla Artemel, in her article "The Great Turk's Particular Inclination to Red Herring," shows the ambivalence displayed in the attitudes towards the Turk in English drama.⁹ A number of recent works call attention to the inappropriateness of projecting "Orientalist" ideas onto the early modern setting, such as Nabil Matar's *Islam and Britain, 1558–1685*, and his *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*.¹⁰ Matar reasserts the claim that contemporary English writers "did not express either authority of possessiveness or the security of domination."¹¹ Brandon Beck's *From the Rising of the Sun*, Jack D'Amico's *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama*, and Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness* deal specifically with the image of either the Ottoman or the Moor and are among those influential works that focus on the variety of representations of the Other on the early modern English stage.¹² Because of their vast scope, these works do not analyze individual works but present a general evaluation of the image of the Other.

The last wave of scholarship, which appeared around the turn of this century, produced the influential articles and monographs of Daniel Vitkus, Jonathan Burton, Matthew Dimmock, and Linda McJannet. Vitkus, one of the most productive scholars in the field, focuses on Anglo-Mediterranean commercial relations and the effects of the Anglo-Islamic exchange on the stage.¹³ In their monographs, Jonathan Burton and Linda McJannet goes

⁹ Suheylyla Artemel, "The Idea of Turkey in the Elizabethan Period in the Early 17th Century with Special Reference to Drama" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 1966), "The Great Turk's Particular Inclination to Red Herring," 211.

¹⁰ Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

¹¹ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 11.

¹² Brandon Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991); Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

¹³ Daniel Vitkus, "Adventuring Heroes in the Mediterranean: Mapping the Boundaries of Anglo-Islamic Exchange on the Early Modern Stage," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 75–95; "Early Modern Orientalism: Representa-

beyond the binaries of Said's concept and shifts the focus to some less-known plays.¹⁴ Importantly, most of the above studies neglect to incorporate into their analysis the Eastern sources, both historical and literary. As a result, the Eastern Other remains merely an object of Western discourse.

The Image, the Sources, and the Story

This study aims to analyze the various reconstructions of the death of Mustafa, an episode of Ottoman history, in the English context. By evaluating two English plays, the anonymous Cambridge play *Solymannidae* and Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, in terms of their relation to their sources and with specific attention to their alterations of the Suleyman-Mustafa story, I shall try to make a closer reading of the texts than offered previously. The purpose is to fill a gap in the literature through a comparative analysis of two English texts that are literary responses to a single historical event, and to provide the reader with the Eastern and Western constructs.

A precisely historicized depiction of English culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicates that the binary opposition of colonizer and colonized, so frequently employed by the historians of the field to explain the Anglo-Mediterranean relationships of the era, turns out to be meaningless in this particular context. Under the influence of Said's all-encompassing concept of "Orientalism," most readings of the texts accept and assert the assumption that the attitude of early modern Europe

tions of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David Blanks (London: Macmillan, 1999); *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk and The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); "Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 145–76; *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁴ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*; Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Still, most of the works mentioned here focus on a small number of texts, excluding many of those mentioned in Wann's article. Therefore, despite the efforts of recent scholars, many texts unquestionably still await a reading that casts a more critical eye on the representation of the Other, without applying the traditional models of post-colonial theories.

towards the Eastern Other remained “static and stereotypical.”¹⁵ Actually, the fixed stereotypical depictions of the Eastern Other as irrational, despotic, heretical, and fanatic belong to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century representations rather than the early modern ones. A general evaluation of the sources that deal with the Eastern Other indicates that tracing a continuity and coherence in the early modern Western depictions of the East is quite problematic. Instead, what emerges is discontinuity and the transformation of ideas and identifications. Contrary to Said’s argument that Orientalism existed not through “its openness, its receptivity to the Orient” but through “internal repetitious consistency about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient,” early modern texts about the Eastern Others present a variety of changing ideas rather than a consistent repetition.¹⁶ As Çırakman puts it, Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have had quite ambivalent impressions that “range from sympathy, admiration, amazement and anxiety to fear and hatred.”¹⁷

Recent analysis of a variety of texts from early modern England has shown that the formation of English identity in this period cannot be explained by the simplistic categories of “self” and “Other.”¹⁸ Though Said portrayed East and West as monolithic ideological constructs, there were no such unified ideological structures as the “European” self and the “non-European/Eastern” Other in the early modern period. “The East” or “the Orient” became a clearly defined geographical and cultural category for the English only after the formation of the British Empire, and only after the beginning of Orientalism as a manner of thought “based upon ontological and epistemological distinction.”¹⁹ In the sixteenth-century English mind, there did not exist a monolithic, standardized Other in contrast to which they could form their own Englishness. Instead, it was a more

¹⁵ Anthony Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 11.

¹⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, c1979), 222.

¹⁷ Aslı Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: P. Lang, 2002), 13.

¹⁸ For a discussion of Englishness and the Other in early modern period, see Anna Loomba, “‘Delicious Traffick’: Alterity and Exchange on Early Modern Stages,” in *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespeare Studies and Production*, vol. 52, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 1–25; Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 1–20; McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 1–15.

¹⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

general Mediterranean Other that included a variable set of identity categories such as race, religion, and language.²⁰ As Matar also claims, only in the eighteenth century did the lands of Islam become material for "Orientalist" constructions.²¹ Therefore, the rhetoric produced as a result of early modern England's economic and social expansion either celebrated or condemned Islam and the Muslims, based on the perception of the connections with them.

Said assumed that Orientalism was transhistorical, as he believed that the West had always been in a dominant position vis-à-vis the East, which was silent and weak.²² However, England was not an imperial power before the end of the seventeenth century, as the Tudor period was more an age of unfulfilled ambitions than an age of success and splendor.²³ The "empire" James I inherited had great political and economic problems and was far from being a real imperial power.²⁴ On the other hand, Ottomans in the early modern period were the dominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean and much of Eastern Europe. As a result of Ottoman control over the trade routes of the East, European trade depended on Ottoman contact. In this period, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch forces were expanding westward, but they were defending themselves against the Ottomans, and the English were not immune to the fear of Ottoman power either. On the contrary, they were as well informed on the Ottoman expansion as the Europeans on the Continent. Thomas Newton, in his preface to a translation of Curione's *Saracenicae Historiae*, notes that "they were at the very first very far from our climate and religion, and therefore the less to be feared, but now they are even at our doors and ready to come into our houses."²⁵ Therefore, "backward projection of the later British Empire," as Burton defines it, is an obstacle to any discussions regarding the fluidity of representations in the period.²⁶

²⁰ Ibid., 8–10.

²¹ Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 12.

²² Said, *Orientalism*, 94.

²³ Vitkus, "Adventuring Heroes in the Mediterranean," 76–77; Jonathan Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 129–31.

²⁴ Bruce Lenman, *England's Colonial Wars, 1550–1688: Conflicts, Empire and National Identity* (New York: Longman, 2001), 142.

²⁵ Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 212.

²⁶ Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations," 129.

English interest in the Ottoman Empire and culture became important only after the mid-sixteenth century, a hundred years after the establishment of relationships between the Turks and the rest of Europe. Sixteenth-century England was never at war with the Ottomans. Instead, the relationship started with intensive diplomatic and trade relations, along with some interest in a military alliance. Before the 1570s, England was largely dependent and passive in terms of commercial activities. By the late 1570s, the growing conflict with Spain forced Elizabeth to encourage English merchants to form an alliance with the Ottomans and to establish an embassy in Istanbul.²⁷ The Ottomans, instead of supporting "highly papist" France, chose to ally with the English.²⁸

The English took action by sending William Harborne to Istanbul in 1578.²⁹ Although they tried, the English could not hide the news of their alliance from other parties in Europe, and soon, other ambassadors in Istanbul reported to their countries on negotiations between the English and the Ottomans.³⁰ The idea of the common "corps" of Christendom pushed Protestant England into a corner. There had always been Spanish attacks on Elizabeth for her alliance with the Ottomans, but at the end of the sixteenth century, the impact of these criticisms became increasingly important in the external responses to Elizabeth's rule.

Worse than the external criticisms for Elizabeth were the internal attacks on her reign. According to an anonymous work, titled *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles, Presvpposed to be Intended Against the Realme of England*, England was pitted against the Church of God and all old allies and friends. "But yf we look what new confederates they haue chosen, in stede of the old," continues the anonymous author, "we shall see them to be the great Turk, the kings of . . . all professed enemies of Christ." *A Declaration of the True Causes* goes on to glorify the noble and famous kings of England who had fought in the Crusades against the Turk, accusing the contemporary rulers of making Catholicism seem far more odious than Islam.³¹ Implicitly connecting England with the Ottomans, as

²⁷ Vitkus, "Adventuring Heroes," 77.

²⁸ Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations," 131; Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 360–65.

²⁹ Burton, "Anglo-Ottoman Relations," 132.

³⁰ Ibid., 133.

³¹ As quoted in Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 164.

two allied powers that were outside the Church of God, led to the commonplace assertion that the English were worse than the Turks, and indeed were "the new Turkes."³²

Formal diplomatic relations with the Ottomans were established in 1581, together with a permanent representative of England in Istanbul, in order to handle trading privileges and legal protection for the English merchants. Soon the Levant Company was founded in Izmir (Smyrna). The first English trading mission arrived in Aleppo in 1583. On many occasions, Elizabeth herself and English traders appealed to Sultan Murad III, or his high officials, concerning their problems. Despite James's personal hostility towards Islam, he realized that in terms of Ottoman trade, for his own financial interests he had to take the same position as Elizabeth.³³ The peace with Spain and James's oft-quoted remarks on the unity of Christendom against the infidels indicated a great shift in English policy.

In early modern England there was more than one strategy to represent the Ottomans that did not depend only on the binary perception of the English as self and the Turk as the Other. Representation strategies were formulated around the Turk/Muslim/Eastern, the European/Catholic/Western, and the English/Protestant triangle. Granted, it is hard to confirm the domination of one of these strategies over the others for any specific period. However, it is feasible that the transformation of the image of the Other, or the emergence of some new strategies to represent the Ottomans does not exclude the possibility of the survival of previous clichés. Therefore, it is important to deal with the documents within these contexts, rather than making generalizations about some genre or period. Most of the recent studies that focus on letters, state documents, and political treatises seem to assume that the discourse seen in the official texts was repeated by playwrights of the age. The texts investigated in this study indicate that not all parties welcomed state alliances based on economic interests. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on particular cases rather than to replace old assumptions with new ones. These individual cases are based on the following primary sources:

³² Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 166.

³³ For James's attitude towards Islam, see Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 31–32.

1. The basic texts are two English plays: the anonymous Cambridge play *Solymannidae*³⁴ and Fulke Greville's closet drama *The Tragedy of Mustafa*.³⁵
2. The second group of sources is composed of the two earliest European accounts of the death of Sehzade Mustafa: Nicolas à Moffan's *Soltani Solymanni Turcarum Imperatoris horrendum facinus*, and the relevant parts of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*.³⁶
3. The third group of sources contains the Ottoman histories and mourning poems written after the death of Sehzade Mustafa.

There is definitely no direct connection between the first two groups of primary sources and the third one, because the story is not transmitted from the Ottoman to the European side through any direct textual connection. The story of Sehzade Mustafa was orally transmitted to Moffan by one of his fellow prisoners, whereas Busbecq heard it in the palace circles.³⁷ However, a compilation of the story material from Ottoman sources and their variants may supply us with a complete set of stories with possible gossip and speculations that were preserved in the collective memory of the people. A comparison of such a collected version with the one narrated by European authors allows us to point out the specific alterations made upon the material the European authors might have heard from the Ottoman side. Therefore, the Ottoman sources will be employed to appreciate the European variations and the Western "flavor" added to the story.

Very little is known about the anonymous Senecan drama *Solymannidae*, which is preserved in the British Library, together with the tragedy *Fatum Vortigerni*. According to Donna Sutton, who has prepared the recent critical edition of the text, this piece can be seen as a regular English uni-

³⁴ Dana F. Sutton, ed., *Solymannidae* (hypertext critical edition) (University of California, Irvine). For all quotes from *Solymannidae*, see <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/soly/act1eng.html> (accessed November 2015).

³⁵ Fulke Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, in *Selected Writings of Fulke Greville*, ed. Joan Rees (London: Athlone Press, 1973), 65–138.

³⁶ Nicolas à Moffan, *Soltani Solymanni Turcarum*; Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*.

³⁷ Moffan, *Le Meurtre exécrable et inhumain, commis par Soltan Solymann, grand Seigneur des Turcs, en la personne de son fils aîné Soltan Mustaphe* (1556). *Introduction*. This French version of the text also includes an introduction, where we find information about Moffan's slavery story and his reasons for writing the text. The introductory part is incorporated in the text (in Painter's version, and excluded in Goughe's translation).

versity play, and it is almost certainly a Cambridge one.³⁸ Bearing the notation of “1581 Martii 5us” on the title page, the text reveals its date.³⁹ Fulke Greville’s *Mustapha* was composed around 1596, but the text was heavily revised by the author after it first appeared in 1609. This revised quarto version was also published in Greville’s collected works around 1633.⁴⁰

Greville’s *The Tragedy of Mustapha* was composed as a Senecan closet drama. Although this gives us an idea of the “popularity” of the text in its time, Greville’s influence as a politician and his proximity to the ruling class makes the play an especially important one in terms of representations. Greville was not writing for a wider audience, nor were his ideas revealed to an extensive group of spectators. Still, his elaborate discourse on political behavior and the general condition of human beings—transmitted through the Suleyman-Mustafa story—gives us an insight into the different understandings of Englishness and a comparison with the Other.

The second set of sources, the historical accounts that playwrights such as Moffan and Busbecq used, was the *archetypal* texts on the issue. Nicolas à Moffan was a French historian active in the second half of the sixteenth century. According to the *Nouvelle biographie générale*, he was born into a noble family, then studied law, but interrupted his education to become a soldier. Moffan joined the army of Charles V and fought against “the enemies of Christianity.”⁴¹ After being “badly injured,” he was taken prisoner and sent to Istanbul, where he lived for three years. He was freed

³⁸ BL MS. 723, ff. 43–63, Dana F. Sutton, introduction to <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/soly/intro.html> (accessed July 2015).

³⁹ Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 300. Sutton also notes that this date corresponds to Shrove Tuesday of that year, which is in itself meaningful, as it denotes a popular time for university festivals. According to her, there is little evidence that indicates a specific performance of the play.

⁴⁰ McLannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 155. Fulke Greville (1554–1628), one of the most influential politicians of his age, hailed from a rich Warwickshire family. He was educated at Shrewsbury and Cambridge and served the English Crown for more than forty years. He was one of Queen Elizabeth’s favorites and worked in various positions for the state during James’s and Charles’s reigns. On religious issues Greville supported the Puritans and in politics he preferred the monarchy—not because he believed in the divine right of the king but because he perceived the monarchy to be the best balance between the ruler and the ruled. He was also a poet and a playwright who authored some influential treatises and a longer prose work, *The Life of Sydney*.

⁴¹ D. Hoefler, *Nouvelle biographie générale: depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu’à nos jours, avec les renseignements bibliographiques et l’indication des sources à consulter* (Paris, 1852–1866), World Bibliography Online, <http://db.saur.de/WBIS/welcome.jsf>.

due to the intervention of Christopher, Duke of Württemberg, to whom he later dedicated his work.⁴²

During his captivity, he heard the story of Mustafa from a certain Turk who was “condemned to perpetual prison” for “reason of debts.”⁴³ Through his friendship with that Turkish man, he also had the “fantastic opportunity” to learn about the “detestable murder” of Sehzade Mustafa. Moffan’s major work *Soltani Solymani* was written to retell this story to the French people.⁴⁴ Not only the French but also other nations were interested in Moffan’s account, which was first published in Latin in 1555. After the French and German translations of 1556, a second Latin edition was published in Paris in the same year. The first English translation appeared in 1559.⁴⁵ Ogier de Busbecq’s *Turkish Letters* were published twenty-five years after the first publication of Moffan’s account. When Busbecq arrived in Istanbul, Mustafa had been dead for two years. However, most of the protagonists in the story were still alive, and Busbecq had a chance to see them and talk to them. Thus he could gather material for his version of the story from people around him.

Ottoman chronicles and mourning poems that were composed right after the murder will be used here to reconstruct an imaginary version of the story.⁴⁶ The most important contemporary accounts are Ali’s *Kühül Ahbar* (The Source of Knowledge) and Nişancı Mehmed Pasha’s *Hadisat*

⁴² “A Tresillustre prince and seigneur, monseigneur Christofle, Duc de Vuirtemberg and Teclz, Comte de Montbelliard, Nicolas de Moffan, son humble serviteur, Salut. . .” Ibid.

⁴³ “. . . du soir j’estois enfermé avecq’ un certain Turc, qui, à raison de debtes, avoit esté condamné à perpetuelle prison.” Ibid.

⁴⁴ “. . . au temps de ma captivité, le detestable meurtre commis en la personne du Mustaphe par l’ordonnance de Soltan Soliman grand Seigneur et Empereur des Turcs, et pere d’iceluy, comme ne forlignant point ny degenerant de la tyrannie furieuse et enragee de ses ancestres: non pas toustefois que mon intention feut de le metre en lumiere, mais à fin qu’en l’escrivant j’eusse moyen d’imprimer plus facilement en ma memoire une histoire digne d’estre racontee devant ceux de nostre pays, à fin qu’ayant recouvert liberté j’en feisse le comte à ceux qui le méritent. . .” Ibid.

⁴⁵ Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520–1660)* (Paris: Boivin, 1940), 421.

⁴⁶ The chronicles referred to are Ali, Mustafa bin Ahmed, *Kühül Ahbar* [The source of knowledge], (Ankara, 1961); Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, *Hadisat* [The events] (Istanbul, 1983); Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede, *Sahâif-ül-Ahbar fî Vekayi-ül-a’sar* [The pages of the knowledge on the Events of Years] (Istanbul, 1968); Hasan Bey-zade Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Bey-zade Tarihi* [History of Hasan Bey-zade] (Ankara, 2004); İbrahim Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi* [History of Peçevi] (Istanbul, 1968); Solak-zade Mehmed Hemdemi Çelebi, *Solak-zade Tarihi* [History of Solak-zade] (Ankara, 1989).

(The Events). In addition, a number of seventeenth-century chronicles and histories, such as *Hasan Bey-zade Tarihi*, *Sahaif-ül-Ahbar fî Vekayi-ül-a'sar*, *Peçevi Tarihi* and *Solak-zade Tarihi*, will be consulted to show versions of the story through the eyes of the Ottoman historians of the time. Although most of the later records repeat the information given by Ali and Nişancı Mehmed, these accounts are still useful, because they provide us with a fuller version of the story, including speculations and variations, regarding some details. In turn, the mourning poems, written by contemporary poets such as Yahya Bey, Sami, Funûnî, and Rahmî, not only reveal different minutiae about the event but also mirror the impact of the murder on the general public.⁴⁷

The Death of Sehzade Mustafa in Ottoman Sources

Mustafa, the eldest son of Sultan Suleyman, was born in Manisa in 1515. His mother was Mah-i Devran Sultan, a woman of *devşirme*⁴⁸ origin who lost power in palace circles after Hurrem gave Suleyman another son.⁴⁹ After the death of Hafsa Sultan (Suleyman's mother), Hurrem strengthened her position in the palace. Under her influence, Mustafa was sent to Saruhan as a *sanjak beyi*,⁵⁰ and thus he was removed from the circle of power around the palace. Immediately before Suleyman's 1534 campaign in Persia, he was appointed by his father to be the governor of Manisa.⁵¹ From Manisa, which was an important *sanjak*, he was sent to Amasya in 1541, even farther away from the center. This move was initiated by Hurrem, who consolidated her power after the execution of İbrahim Pasha (1536).⁵² The hostility between Hurrem and Mustafa was widely known.

⁴⁷ The mourning poems referred to will be Yahya Bey's, Sami's, Funûnî's, Rahmî's, Fazlî's, Nisayî's, and Mudamî's *Mersiyes* as quoted in M. Çavuşoğlu "Sehzade Mustafa Mersiyesi," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1982), 641–86.

⁴⁸ *Devşirme* (recruit) refers to the levy of Christian children to be trained for posts in the palace. Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 219.

⁴⁹ Çağatay Uluçay, "Mustafa," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Encyclopedia of Islam) (Istanbul, 1965), 690.

⁵⁰ A *sanjak beyi* was the governor of a *sanjak*, a subdivision of a province. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 224.

⁵¹ Uluçay, "Mustafa," 691.

⁵² *Ibid.*

According to Müneccimbaşı Ahmed, Suleyman had chosen Mustafa as his heir.⁵³ However, Hurrem and Mihrimah Sultan, her daughter by Suleyman, married to Rüstem Pasha, wanted Bayazid, Suleyman's son by Hurrem, to succeed his father. According to the author, that was the reason "the female party" encouraged Rüstem to conspire against Mustafa.⁵⁴ Müneccimbaşı Ahmed's narration blames Rüstem and "female deceit" for the death of the sehزade. They convinced Suleyman that his life and rule were threatened by his son. However, the work provides scant information on the actual intrigue, or the death of Mustafa. Ali, on the other hand, states that Bayazid⁵⁵ enjoyed the love and support of his father, his mother, and the grand vizier.⁵⁶ Mustafa was supported by the army and by the *ulema*.⁵⁷ In 1552, instead of leading the army himself, Suleyman sent Rüstem to Anatolia in a campaign against Persia. Meanwhile, Mustafa's supporters from the army encouraged him to take action against Rüstem, who apparently did not favor Mustafa:

Some among the soldiers approached Mustafa with vows of loyalty, saying "your father is old and he doesn't have the power to lead the army anymore. That's why he appointed Rüstem as the head of the

⁵³ "Suleyman Han Sultan Mustafa'yi veliaht tayin etmek istiyorlardı." [Sultan Suleyman wanted to appoint Mustapha as his heir.] Müneccimbaşı, *Sahâif-ül-Ahbar*, 565.

⁵⁴ "Aslında bu hadise kadınların hilesi sonunda meydana geldi." [Actually, this event was the result of the deceit of women.] Ibid.

⁵⁵ "Peder ve mâderin, hususen Rüstem Paşa gibi Vezîr-i ekberin iltifât ve rağbetleri Sultân Bayezid semtine ve ekser asâkir-i celâlet-rehberin ve ba'zi meşâyih ve ülemay-ı hüner-verin sa'y u himmetleri Sultân Mustafa cânibine ve hüddâm-ı havass-ı mihrimân-ı harem-ihtisâs olan ağaların teveccühleri, henüz Saray-ı Âmire'de babasıyla bile sâkin olub sâir şehzâdeler gibi Sancak alâkasiyle paytahttan cûda düşmeyen Sultan Cihangîr cenâbına masrûf olub, Selim şah-î mansûrun nâmı alınmaz, vâris-i tâc u taht olanlar tezekkür kilindikça halkın havratırına bile hutûr etmez idi." [The praises of his father and mother and especially the influential viziers, like Rüstem, went to Bayazid, whereas the love and respect of the soldiers and the *ulema* went to Mustafa and the support of palace *ağas* to Cihangir, who was still with his father in the palace, not yet ruling a province like his brothers. The name of Selim was not mentioned when people talked about the heir of Suleyman.] Şerafeddin Turan, *Kan-uninin Oğlu Sehزade Bayazid Vakası* [The event of Sehزade Bayazid, son of Suleyman the Magnificent] (Ankara, 1961), 17.

⁵⁶ The vizier (vezir in Turkish) was a minister of the sultan and a member of the Imperial Council. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 226.

⁵⁷ *Ulema* is the general name given to the group of experts of Muslim canon law, tradition, and theology. Ulema as a group had always been influential in the palace circles. Ibid.

army for this campaign." . . . Through these words they convinced him of this unrealistic desire.⁵⁸

According to Ali, there was a daring idea to kill Rüstem while he campaigned and to present Mustafa's ascent to the throne as a fait accompli. Still, no evidence indicates that Mustafa took any direct action to accomplish that plan.⁵⁹

However, Rüstem, who was an experienced vizier, heard about such rumors in the army and took action: "Without losing time, Rüstem, the cautious Pasha wrote everything he had heard spoken in the army [appearing] clearly on a paper and sent it to the palace immediately with Şemsi Pasha and Ali Ağa from spahis."⁶⁰

According to Ali's narrative, Suleyman got very angry when he read the letter. He refused to believe the claims against Mustafa and ordered that people stop talking about the issue. In this narrative, Suleyman appears to be an unbiased father who refuses to believe the gossip against his son. He says, "Let it be far from him to run after something with the desire of power, in my lifetime, and ask for something that he doesn't yet deserve."⁶¹ Still, according to Peçevi, his decision to dismiss the army and suddenly recall Rüstem to Istanbul was the result of the rumors that he had read about himself, especially about his advanced age.⁶² However, Ali says the decision to postpone the campaign was prompted by the letters coming from Persia. Münecimbaşı Ahmed, on the other hand, considers the harsh winter to have been the reason.⁶³

⁵⁸ "Meyân-ı leşkerden ba'zı ağniyâ, mezbûr şehzâdeye arz-ı sıdk u safâ idüp, Vâlid-i mâcîdin kocaldı hareket-i sefere takat götürmekten kaldı; anun çün Rüstem Paşa'yı Serdar idüp Anadolu'ya saldı deyü izlâl etmişler, tenk dururken bu sevdây-ı batılla direnge çıkarmışlar." As quoted in Turan, *Kanuninin Oğlu*, 27.

⁵⁹ Although there is not enough evidence to assert that Mustafa was plotting against his father, it is certain that he had plans for the time after Suleyman's death. The letter he sent to Erzurum *beylerbeyi* Ayas Pasha indicates that he thought that as the eldest son, it was his right to rule after his father, and he believed himself to be superior to the other şehzades. For analysis of the letter, see Turan, *Kanuninin Oğlu*, 23.

⁶⁰ "Rüstem Paşa, zaman kaybetmeden, bu kötülüklerin asker içinde şuyûunu, iğned-en ipliğe kadar, bir kâğida yazarak, Şemsi Paşa ve sipahiden Ali Ağa ile alelacele Âsitâne-i saâdete irsâl eyledi." Solak-zade Mehmed, *Solak-zade Tarihi*, 230.

⁶¹ "Hâşâ ki Mustafa Hân'im bu ma'kule küstahlığı irtikâb ide ve benim zamân-ı hayatımda sevdây-i mülke pâyini li-hakkından taşra uzata?" as quoted in Turan, *Kanuninin Oğlu*, 29.

⁶² Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 301.

⁶³ Turan, *Kanuninin Oğlu*, 29.

There is another version of the story that includes another letter. Hasan Bey-zade takes the basics for his narration from Ali's *Kühül Ahbar*. However, after finishing the story as Ali had, he elaborates on the intrigue of Hurrem and Rüstem. According to his version, after Hurrem appealed to Rüstem to save her son from the certain death he would face if Mustafa succeeded Suleyman, Rüstem forged letters with Mustafa's name and seal and scattered them among the soldiers, while keeping copies for himself, to be presented to Sultan Suleyman.⁶⁴ The author is convinced of Mustafa's innocence. However, Hasan Bey-zade gives few details about the content of the letter, aside from claiming that it was "full of deceit." In a letter of denunciation that is addressed directly to Suleyman after Sehzade Mustafa's death, the unknown author states that Rüstem had secretly corresponded with the Persian shah, Tahmasb, by forging a copy of Mustafa's seal.⁶⁵ In the mourning poems as well, there are references to "a few fake letters."⁶⁶ Thus according to those texts, Rüstem's campaign against Mustafa apparently included at least some fake documents. It might have been those letters that finally convinced an unbelieving Suleyman of Mustafa's guilt.

The rest of Mustafa's story remains by and large the same in various sources. When the time for the Nahcivan campaign approached, Suleyman and his youngest son Cihangir left Istanbul, on August 28, 1553.⁶⁷ On September 1, 1553, Suleyman and his army arrived in Ereğli, where they

⁶⁴ "Mehd-i ulyâ-yi saltanat, hâsseki sultan, 'Pâdişâh-ı Süleymân-unvânun Dârü'l-cinân'a intikâli akreb-i ezmanda, vakı' olusa, saltanat u hilâfet, ekber-i Şehzâdegân olup, mâder-i âhardan olan Sultân Mustafa Hân'a intikâl idüp, benüm evlâdum katl ü izâle olınmak lâzım gelür, buna bir tedbir idün' diyü dâmâdı Rüstem Paşa'ya ibrâm eylemeğin, ol mekkâr u hile-kâr, Sultân Mustafa lisânından ba'z-ı mekâtib tahrir itdürüp, asker-i zafer-tes'ir içine bırakdurup, bir kaçını yedine alup, Pâdişâh-ı Süleymân-mekâna gösterüp bir tedbir eylemek gereksin diyü ibrâm eylemekle. . ." [Hasseki Sultan appeals to her son-in-law Rüstem, saying, "If Sultan Suleyman dies soon, Mustafa, his son from the previous mother, will be his heir and my son will be executed; find a solution for this." After this, that deceitful Rüstem writes some letters with the name of Mustafa, leaves some of them among the soldiers and takes the others with him. Showing the letters to the sultan, he advises him to take some measure. . .] Hasan Bey-zade Ahmed Paşa, *Hasan Bey-zade Tarihi*, 131.

⁶⁵ Topkapı Arsivi E. 5103. The letter was published in Şerafeddin Turan, "Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar" [Rüstem Pasha and accusations about him], *İÜEF Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 11–12 (1955): 11–50.

⁶⁶ "Bir iki egri fesâd ehli nitekim şemşir/ Bir iki nâme-i tevzîri kıldı katline tîr," Yahya Bey, "Mersiye," V.

⁶⁷ Peçevi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, 162.

met Mustafa and his forces. The following morning, the heads of the army and the statesmen greeted Mustafa in his tent. Then, together with them, Mustafa visited his father's tent for the customary greetings. There in his father's tent, he was killed, and his dead body was sent to Bursa to be buried next to his elder brother.⁶⁸ According to the poems and most chronicles, Mustafa was strangled.⁶⁹

The Ottoman sources record two different versions. There is the simple, almost codified narration of Nişancı Mehmed, a historian who justifies Suleyman's action:

Sultan Suleyman and all his army, on their way to Persia, stopped in Ereğli. There, Sehzade Sultan Mustafa, coming from Amasya, encountered his father with a great number of soldiers in great excitement and full of ambition for the throne.

However, the sultan, who perceived the evil within his son, separated his head from his body. The body of Sultan Mustafa, who died in this way, was sent to Bursa to be buried there.⁷⁰

Nişancı Mehmed's narration ends with a couplet stating that in the end, "everyone encounters his own plan." Nişancı Mehmed's account alone puts the blame on Mustafa and praises Suleyman's action. In the rest, the authors either blame Rüstem or hold the stepmother responsible for the innocent Mustafa's death. While Ali and Peçevi refer indirectly to an intrigue behind Mustafa's murder and point to Rüstem as the main villain in the plot, they distance themselves from the story by using the passive voice, like: "it is said," "it is told," or "Rüstem was accused. . . ." Müneccimbaşı, however, claims that the reason for Sehzade Mustafa's death was the

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "Yoldı sünbül saçını boynuna geçdükçe resen/ Kara toprağ ile yeksân nic'olur sım beden," Sami, "Mersiye," VI; "ır kemend-i âl ile o şeh şikâr olmuş durur," Fununi, "Mersiye," III; "Kand-i lebinde gerd-i fenâdan bulup eşer/ İp takdı gerdenine boğuldu o dem şeker," Rahmi, "Mersiye," IV; "Kayd u bend idüp boğasın ol güzel mihmânı," Nisayi, "Mersiye," IV; "Boynuna dakdun kemendi cânına kıldun ezâ," Nisayi, "Mersiye," I.

⁷⁰ "Yürüyüş esnasında Karaman ülkensinin Ereğli mevkisine varılıp konaklandığı zaman Sehzade Sultan Mustafa Amasya'dan çok miktarda asker ile gelip babasını heyecanlı bir şekilde, saltanat hırsıyla dolu olarak karşıladı. Lakin Oğlunun içindekilere sezen Padişah başını gövdesinden ayırttı. Böylece Ereğli'de vefat eden Sultan Mustafa Bursa'ya götürülerek orda defnolundu." Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, *Hadisat*, 211.

ongoing hostility between him and Rüstem.⁷¹ Solak-zade, whose narration is much more dramatic and emotional, provides details about the intrigue. He blames Rüstem and the stepmother. Hasan Bey-zade, who asserts Mustafa's innocence, also points to Rüstem and the stepmother as the plotters.

Remarkably, Suleyman is missing from the narrations. He is referred to as a successful ruler and warrior who perceives the threat to his rule and eliminates it. This is how Nişancı Mehmed treats the story of the murder. In other texts, he is depicted as a good father who refuses to believe the accusations against his son until he is presented with irrefutable evidence. There is no reference to deception by either his wife or the grand vizier. Even when they mention the plot, the authors try to minimize Suleyman's responsibility for his son's death.

The mourning poems, on the other hand, provide us with more details regarding the event and the public's response to it. According to Yahya Bey, the basic cause for the murder was "a collaboration of the enemy." He also emphasizes Mustafa's innocence, stating that Mustafa entered his father's tent unarmed.⁷² From Fununî, who addressed Mustafa's fate in a poem, we learn that Mustafa was an enemy of the Persian shah—a claim made to refute the rumors that Mustafa had appealed to Persia for help against his father.⁷³ Two poems by Nisayî, a woman poet who was probably from Mustafa's mother's entourage, are bitter in tone and carry the most direct accusations. In her version, Suleyman is blamed for killing his son "without pity," "martyring him in haste and anger," as he is filled with envy and ambition. The poet identifies the plotter: according to her, Suleyman was persuaded by Hurrem, the "Russian witch."⁷⁴ Fununi calls fate "the witch," but that too can be interpreted as a reference to the stepmother.⁷⁵ The poets claim that Mustafa was strangled in his father's tent. They simul-

⁷¹ "Sultan Mustafa'nın katline sebep Rüstem Paşa ile arasında olan düşmanlıktır." [The reason for the execution of Sultan Mustafa was the enmity between him and Rüstem Paşa.] Münecimbaşı, *Sahâif-ül-Ahbar*, 565.

⁷² "Sana ol toğrı idi egri nigâhi yoğ idi/ Hak ana şâhid idi gayri güvâhı yoğ idi. . . . Ceng ider geldi disen iki sipâhi yoğ idi. . . . Yoğ idi cürmi bu Sâmî dir İlâhî yoğ idi," Samî, "Mersiye," VII.

⁷³ "Havfî ile surh-ser geh mest ü geh hayrân iken/ Şâh Tahmâsa kara tağlar gibi düşmân iken," Fununî, "Mersiye," II.

⁷⁴ "Bir Urus câdûsınun sözün kulağına koyup/ Mekk ü âle aldanuban ol 'acûzeyeye uyup," Nisayî, "Mersiye," II.

⁷⁵ "Yüri ey câdû-yı dehr âl âsikâr olmus durur," Fununî, "Mersiye," III.

taneously stress his innocence by criticizing Süleyman for naively believing the plotters and not giving Mustafa a chance to defend himself.

Thus the image of Süleyman appears to be less positive in the poems than in the chronicles. He is shown as unjust, his actions are criticized as an aberration of Ottoman tradition. In complete contrast to the European sources that connect the murder to the absolute rule of the sultan, his own subjects believed he was a just ruler and protested when they perceived his action as unjust. Whereas Yahya Bey states that this was an event “unexplainable” to people, Samî reveals his concern by claiming, “it is the time when fathers kill their sons.” Thus in the poems, the execution of Mustafa is not connected to an accepted fratricide practice. It is perceived as a single extraordinary event, the result of a despicable intrigue. The poems indicate that the Ottomans are critical of a ruler who behaves contrary to tradition and has his innocent son killed.

European Sources and Their Representation of the Süleyman-Mustafa Story

In the following, the “narrativization” of the Süleyman-Mustafa story is discussed as it was treated by two European authors, with special attention paid to how they altered and deviated from the Ottoman storyline. As the authors learned of the murder through their Ottoman connections, versions appearing in the Ottoman sources will be used to reveal their main alterations of the story.

The first account, by Moffan, is a sensationalized cautionary tale that ends with a powerful moral lesson. The text reinforces the stereotypical representations of the Ottomans. Moreover, the main line of narration is frequently broken by dialogues, or long speeches, in order to incorporate the ideas and ideologies of the author. Despite the dominance of negative ideas about the Turks, this text cannot be reduced to a simplistic, one-dimensional narration. As in the case of many slave accounts, this text benefits from the conflicting ideas of the author, mainly because they reflect some of his personal experiences and display the dominance of Western prejudices about Ottoman society and the Turks in general.

Moffan’s text follows the basic story line, but with four significant additions. *Mustapha*, *Soliman’s* eldest son, is claimed to be very popular among the people. He is believed to be the only hope of the country, sent

"by heavenly providence."⁷⁶ After some time, Soliman falls in love with a slave woman, *Rosa*, by whom he has three sons and a girl. The daughter is married to a "pasha," *Rustanus*, who is using his office "with the avarice in him," not only to increase his wealth by stealing from the poor but also to gain the sultan's favor and secure his position in the realm.

After the introduction to the characters in his story, in a flashback, Moffan relates Soliman's marriage to Rosa. Although "it was contrary to the usage and custom of the house of Ottomanno," Soliman marries the slave woman, falling for her well-arranged tricks. Under a veil of devotion, Rosa gains her freedom and then refuses to be taken into Soliman's bedchamber as "shee acknowleged her selfe no lenger to be a bonde, but a fre woman," and therefore, any kind of relationship between the two of them would be "a grevous sinne and offence." Therefore, Soliman, who has "an unbrideled desyre and lust of Rosa," is forced to marry her. With this insertion, Moffan tells us how Rosa, the witty, determined slave woman, gains her first victory over the weak and lustful Soliman, who ignores the customs of his ancestors for the sake of his carnal desires.

Although she is the "chefest of the women of Asia," Rosa's "ambitious endeavors and desires" are not yet fulfilled, because she wants her son to inherit the throne. The only obstacle to her desires is Mustapha, Soliman's eldest son. Together with Rustanus, Rosa tries to raise Soliman's suspicion about Mustapha's loyalty to him, constantly reminding him of the case of Selim.⁷⁷ By describing the various methods by which Rosa tries to achieve her goal, the author reinforces his point about Mustapha's good will and virtue. "Provident wisdom" saves Mustapha from death many times. This is emphasized in the text telling about Mustapha's dream, when he speaks to the Prophet Machomet.

For years, Rosa tries to make her husband furious at Mustapha, until "fortune at length minding to faver those cursed intentes of the woman," brings some "suspicious" letters from the Paschan, Mustapha's personal tutor and advisor. These letters reveal that Mustapha and the daughter of the Persian shah plan to wed. The letter that should have proved the inno-

⁷⁶ I refer to Goughe's reliable translation as a base for Moffan's text. For all quotes from Goughe's translation, see <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>.

⁷⁷ Suleyman's father Selim I, who ruled from 1512 to 1520, had his father, Bayazid II, deposed and murdered. Upon his accession to the throne, Selim I put his brothers to death.

cence of Mustapha is used by Rustanus and the stepmother for Mustapha's destruction. The plotters present them to Soliman as proof of Mustapha's disloyalty and of his plans to ruin his father through an alliance with the Persians, "most auncient and deadly enemies to the springe of Ottomanno." Convinced at last, Soliman decides to kill his son.

Until that point, Soliman scarcely figures in the account of the murder, except for a few clichéd remarks about him like "the unnatural father" or the "impious tyrant." Only after seeing the letters and hearing the story of Mustapha's probable alliance with the Persians was "the troubled minde of the olde manne" brought "to suche passe that he fullye purposed to provide for safegarde of his owne estate, by death of his sonne. . ." Thus at the point when Soliman decides to kill his son, he is depicted as an old and confused man who wants to save his realm.⁷⁸

The second interruption of the basic storyline appears when Moffan tells of an imagined dialogue between Mustapha and his advisor. Mustapha asks his advisor "whether an empire of the worlde, or a blisled lyfe, were rather to be wished for by a man?" To this, the Doctor "frely aunswered": "the Empire of this worlde, unto a man thoroughlye considerynge it, doth bring no felicitye. . . . [It brings] with it selfe, mere sorowe, perplexitye of minde, tribulation, suspicions, manslaughter." Obviously, by putting these words into the mouth of the Doctor, a minor character, Moffan is philosophizing on the nature of kingship. He attaches the evil deeds not to Ottoman identity but to the human condition.

The third break in the narration, the dream of Mustapha, comes after this point. "Sleepyng about the twye light of the daye," Mustapha dreamed of Machomet, "appareled with glisteringe robes." Machomet takes Mustapha by the hand and brings him to a place "moste delectable, garnished with exquisite and gorgeous palaices, and environed with a most pleasant garden." This part includes a portrayal of the Muslim prophet, about whom numerous clichés were circulating in Europe.⁷⁹ Although here he has a chance to portray Islam in a negative light, Moffan chooses not to. Right after his dream, Mustapha tells the Doctor everything and asks for an interpretation. According to the Doctor, this vision "was to be feared, as one whych foreshowed unto hym great peril of hys life." Mustapha, "havyng no respecte to

⁷⁸ McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks*, 147.

⁷⁹ For a summary of these clichés, see Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 387–451.

hys auneswere," claims that he would not stop because of childish fears and denies that he had to be suspicious of his father's intention.

Moffan's last diversion from Ottoman narration is in the part where he speaks at length of the struggle between the two factions of the army: the supporters of Mustapha and those of Soliman's soldiers. As soon as the rumors about the death of Mustapha reach the army, "a bloddye cumbate was fought on bothe sydes, in so much that in short space wer slain above two thousande men, and manye other wounded." The only one who took protective action is *Acmat Pascha*, depicted as "a manne moste grave, and for his vertuous exploits, of no small reputation among the solders." Addressing the soldiers, he says:

What will you nowe deare brethren . . . , degenerating from that wisdom throughe the whiche in so many ages you have been praisen and highelye commended, go against and withstande the commaundementes of the great Soltan our emperour? I cannot . . . marvell enoughe, what hath so inflamed your harts . . . as in this civill conflicte, to stretche fourth these wepons againste your own fellowes, which with suche prosperous successe, and good fortune, you have used upon enemies of the house of Ottomanna and to represent such a spectacle unto your adversaries, that they . . . should now reioyce for their mutual destruction and slaughter.⁸⁰

It is possible that in this part, Moffan was addressing the Christian princes, reminding them to be united against the enemy. With those three breaks from the main storyline, Moffan expresses his ideas on the unworthiness of worldly authority and emphasizes the importance of uniting against the Other. Thus Moffan's digressions from the story are not accidental. They are introduced into the text in order to convey specific ideas of the author.

In terms of the depiction of the Other, Moffan's narration is not fully stereotypical. In addition to the devilish Turks like Rustanus and Rosa, there are characters that are presented at least ambiguously, according to small changes in the narration. In the beginning of the story, where the stereotypes are emphasized, Soliman, the Grand Turk, is a weak and lustful

⁸⁰ Here the rhetorical properties of the Renaissance drama can be identified.

man. When the author uses him to highlight the wickedness of Rosa and Rustanus, he is depicted as a caring and rational father. At the end of the story, Soliman is revealed as a cruel father, a bloodthirsty, wicked man. The depiction of Mustapha also changes in the course of the narration. The Christ-like, obedient, courageous, and witty Mustapha is criticized for not paying attention to the Doctor's interpretation of his vision. And at the end, where the moral lesson is directed to the Christian audience, he becomes a villain whose death should be celebrated.

The second account of the Suleyman-Mustafa story comes from Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*, a work published long after his return from Istanbul. Busbecq's narration is tempered and less sensational in tone than Moffan's, although the letters were published for the common reader rather than for diplomatic circles. Busbecq tells the story of *Mustapha* as an explanation for the deposition of *Roostem*, whom he knew personally. After a brief but positive introduction of Mustapha, Busbecq turns to *Roxolana*, to whom *Soleiman* granted "the position of the legal wife," as he was "so attached to her." Mustapha, as a result of his "remarkable natural gifts and suitability of his age," is seen as the successor of the empire. The first diversion from the Ottoman storyline is when Busbecq explains "the most unhappy" situation of the sons of Turkish sultans:

The Turks tolerate no rival to the throne; indeed, the attitude of the soldiers of the bodyguard makes it impossible for them to do so. For is a brother of the reigning monarch chances to remain alive they never stop demanding largesse; and if their requests are refused, cries of "long live the brother," "God save the brother" are heard whereby they make it pretty clear that they intend to put him on the throne. Sultans of the Turkey are thus compelled to stain their hands with their brothers' blood.⁸¹

Busbecq's explanation of fratricide remains unemotional, considering how this practice of the Ottomans is viewed by European authors. Regarding *Soleiman's* marriage, Busbecq observes Turkish traditions with a neutral attitude; he does not explain them as cruelty or the lust of the Turks but regards them as the peculiarities of the Other.

⁸¹ Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 20.

Busbecq quickly passes to the intrigue part of the story, musing that, "whether Mustapha was afraid of this fate [of being killed by one of the brothers] or Roxolana wished to save her own child by sacrificing him," the actions of Mustapha and Roxolana suggest that Soleiman killed his son. Here Busbecq displays his ambiguity regarding Soleiman's decision. Instead of taking sides, he describes the events as being a result of the usual power politics played out in the palace.

As another digression from the story, Busbecq tells us that Mustapha was summoned to his father "to clear himself of the crimes which he was suspected and now openly accused," although it turns out that Soleiman had already decided to kill his son before he left Istanbul. Thus calling Mustapha was but a trick to catch him. Confronted with such a difficult choice, Mustapha chooses "the braver and more dangerous course."

Soleiman, fearing that Mustapha would defend himself and "being only separated by the linen tent hangings from the scene," casts "fierce and threatening glances upon the mutes and by menacing gestures stops their hesitation". Thereafter, Mustapha is quickly strangled. Busbecq's account ends by claiming that the leaders of the army, "with the usual credulity of the vulgar," believed that "Soleiman had discovered the crimes of Roostem" and were relieved. Busbecq's narration of the story is plausible and down to earth. The murder is narrated as a regular conflict in imperial politics. The character of Soleiman is individualized; the stereotypical representation of the Turk is missing. Soleiman is calm, stern, and reasonable at all times. He has full control over events and saves his own reputation among the soldiers after the murder simply by disposing of Roostem, whom everyone thought to be the plotter. Mustapha is no angel either, although the author praises him for his talent and courage.

These two texts reveal the possible varieties of representation of the Turk in the European mind. Moffan's less-informed work, *Soltani Solymanni*, despite its one-dimensional appearance, reveals complicated figures, sometimes condemned for their lust and deceitfulness, but sometimes praised for their experience, intelligence, and piety. Busbecq, in his more sober and less sensational narration, explains the causes of Mustapha's murder in terms of the ruling system of the Ottoman Empire. In these ways, these accounts, especially Busbecq's, challenge the stereotypical European representations of the Turks.

Suleyman and Mustafa on the English Stage

As a result of the complexity of the ideas regarding the Ottomans and Ottoman-related policies of the English throne, they are represented from different angles and with a variety of features in the plays written in sixteenth-century England. However, *Solymannidae* and Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* present a rather strict traditional anti-Turkish discourse that is blended with a veiled criticism of the socioeconomic realities of the age.

Solymannidae, an anonymous Cambridge play that applies Senecan staging devices to an Eastern topic, was written in 1581 and was probably never performed.⁸² The dramatic construction closely follows the European sources, with a few alterations and an additional sub-plot. The latter is the story of another execution that took place in *Suleiman's* court. *Solymannidae* opens with a ghost reporting on the past and predicting future events. It is the ghost of Selim I (1512–1520), Suleiman's father, who tells the audience about the Ottoman custom of fratricide:

I am the unhappy ghost of Selim . . . I see that the gods, avengers of a father, will not allow a crime to go long unpunished. Victorious, I destroyed my father Bayazid and my two brothers so I alone might possess the throne and abolish all the laws. . .⁸³

Such an opening is typical of the Senecan style; however, Selim's recapitulation of the earlier fratricide is an important message about the Turkish court. Early in the play, with a reference to Selim and his cruelties, the author emphasizes that such conflicts are a part of the traditional behavior in the Ottoman dynastic family. The practice of fratricide, omitted from Ottoman accounts and fleetingly mentioned in the European sources, is used here as the opening. Selim's claim that he murdered his father and brothers to rule alone and to "abolish all the laws" connects the notion of

⁸² Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 437.

⁸³ "Infelix umbra Selimi, qui quondam potens . . . Patris ultores video deos/ Impune nullum facinus diutius pati./ Ego Paizetem victor oppressi patrem / Geminisque fratres, ut regios solus thronos/ Tenerem et omnes, ut supra caput, leges." A hyper-text, critical edition by Dana F. Sutton (University of California, Irvine). For all quotes from *Solymannidae*, see <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/soly/act1eng.html> (accessed October 2015).

cruelty with a desire for absolute power, the two main charges that were circulating in Europe about Ottoman dynastic politics.⁸⁴

In the first act, the ambassador of "Tartary" informs Suleiman that they "had discovered nobody who would have been the equal of Mustapha" to marry the daughter of "the mighty master of Tartary."⁸⁵ The possible marriage of *Mustapha*, also mentioned in Moffan, the main source of *Solymannidae*, is the central plot of the play. Here, however, instead of rumors, Suleiman is informed by the ambassador who asks "if such an offer is to [his] liking."⁸⁶ Removing the reason for Suleiman's suspicion of his son should reassure him, but he continues to mistrust Mustapha. In a conversation with a Turk who accompanies the ambassador, Suleiman asks about his son's reaction to the offer and summons Mustapha "to see the virtue of his family." Suleiman is thus shown to be suspicious of his son before the plotters try to influence him.⁸⁷ His claims that Mustapha "possesses a province full of warlike man" and "on all sides he has blood-thirsty flocks of men" are to remind Christians of the awesome, terrible army of the Turk, but they also indicate that Suleiman is afraid of his own son, whom he has not seen for four years.⁸⁸ His next sentence, "perhaps under his generalship I am destined to conquer the Christians and subdue them to my yoke," is yet another message of the author directed at Christians.⁸⁹ The first time, the chorus recites:

Mustapha, who in his pride hopes for a wedding that will be deadly
for this realm, is preparing his own downfall. Taken in by his father's
deceit, he will succumb.⁹⁰

The anonymous author depicts Mustapha as a vain youth who is willing to accept an offer that would be deadly for his realm. He is not a strong knightly figure as depicted in the Ottoman and other European works but

⁸⁴ Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 213.

⁸⁵ "... Ut regis prolem stirpem cum regis thoro/ Aequali sortiet, haud quemquam similem tuo/ Invenit Mustaphae. . ."

⁸⁶ "Conditio si talis placet."

⁸⁷ "Volo videre stirpis virtutem meae/ Et ingens Ottomanni faelicis genus."

⁸⁸ "Provinciam bellicis tenet plenam viris,/ Habet cruentos undique populorum greges."

⁸⁹ "Forsan Christigenas illo domiturus duce/ Iugo captivis opprimam victor meo."

⁹⁰ "Qui nuptias regno graves/ Superbus optat, exitum sibi parat,/ Mustapha paterno captus occumbet dolo."

a young man full of pride who is surrounded “with blood-thirsty flocks of men.”

The second act introduces *Rhode*, *Roxanes*, and Selim, the son of Suleiman. The plans of Rhode are revealed, but only after the conflict between father and son have been discussed. Just as in the European accounts, in *Solymanidae* Rhode is a woman of fierce ambition who believes that “one must gain power by doing right and wrong.”⁹¹ As a deviation from the Ottoman sources, Selim, the heir apparent to the throne after Mustapha, is included in the play. He is depicted as a passive young man, entirely under the authority of his mother.

Another departure from the Ottoman sources is the introduction of *Hybrachimus*, İbrahim Pasha (1493–1536). A vizier of Suleyman, İbrahim, a pasha of *devşirme* origin, was one of the best advisors and viziers of Suleyman, whom he had known since his childhood. However, in 1536, without a trial, he was executed on Suleyman’s orders.⁹² İbrahim Pasha, who was executed seventeen years before Mustafa, appears on stage. His fate, briefly mentioned in Moffan’s work, gains special significance in *Solymanidae*. In the play, he is another victim of Suleiman’s rage. He urges the sultan to deal calmly with his suspicions of Mustapha. İbrahim’s “honest piety,” which overcomes the “credulous fears” of his friend, makes him a target of Rhode’s and Roxanes’s intrigue. Roxanes hands Rhode a “little notebook” where he has written down everything “ever since powerful Hybrachimus began to lord it in the palace to the detriment of our prince’s wealth and the condition of his empire” and asks her to give it to Suleiman.⁹³ His wife’s machinations have their effect. The sultan summons Hybrachimus to listen to and take his counsel, but he no longer trusts his faithful friend. They discuss Ottoman conquests in Europe and Asia, reminding the Christians of the permanent Ottoman danger.

During the conversation, Hybrachimus refers to the plotters, and his astuteness contrasts sharply with Suleiman’s gullibility. The sultan believes every word he hears from Roxanes and Rhode. Suleiman faces another moral conflict as plans to have İbrahim executed. He remembers the oath

⁹¹ “Regna per fas et nefas/ Paranda.”

⁹² M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “İbrahim Paşa,” *İslam Ansilopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam] (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1965), 915.

⁹³ “Hic est libellus. Hunc mecum tacitus tuli,/ Ex quo Hybrachimus nimium caepit potens/ Dominare in aula adversus principis opes/ Statumque imperii.”

he took as a youth, declaring, "I swear by the gods that Hybrachimus's life will be safe as long as I live."⁹⁴ However, Roxanes convinces him that "in a kingdom, whatever is greater than royal power drags everything to its ruin."⁹⁵ Indecisive, Suleiman consults *Ajax*, another pasha, and, in order to "preserve the empire and his faith at the same time," asks to see the "venerable mufti."⁹⁶ Suleiman wants to know whether it is "permissible" to break an oath. Learning about the oath and the sultan's involvement, the mufti gives his ambiguous advice:

Good. Having taken that oath, you are only able to kill Hybrachimus in the middle of the night. . . . When all things are still as they are overcome by sleep and slumber possesses you as you lie abed. . . . But don't command this. Point out the steel with which you want his throat to be cut, and leave the rest to your trusty slaves.⁹⁷

The immoral response of a religious man is condemned by the chorus: "Cunning men always conceal the deceits of kings and the base strivings of their crimes."⁹⁸ The mufti is denounced for catering to the emperor's wicked desire. The interpolation serves to remind Christians of the stereotype of the tricky and oath-breaking Turk.⁹⁹

In the last act, the author returns to the Suleyman-Mustafa story and finally introduces Mustapha. The messenger who comes from the "Seraglio" reports to Mustapha on the execution of Hybrachimus. "Fearful Suleiman himself, not daring to harm his pasha's sacred body, gave a sword and ordered it be plunged in his throat, for the man's red blood to be let. . ."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ "Obstat consilio sacra/ Conceptum voce votum quo testes deos/ Olim iuravi Hybrachimo vitam fore/ Me vivo incolumem."

⁹⁵ "Quicquid in regno magis/ Valet quam regnum cuncta in exitium trahit."

⁹⁶ "Servare regnum servata fide potes. . ."

⁹⁷ "Bene est. Iuratus illo Hibrachimum modo/ Potes necare,/ Cum omnia silent/ Humente pressa somno, teque intima quies/ Tenet iacentem lecto, Hybrachimum sine/ In Orcum mitti. Nec tamen fieri iube./ Demonstra ferrum, quo velis iugulum peti,/ Caetera relinque servis quos fidos habes."

⁹⁸ "Principum fraudes, scelerumque turpes/ Homines conatus semper versuti tegunt."

⁹⁹ Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 209.

¹⁰⁰ "Solymannus ipse trepidans, vix ausus sacrum/ Violare corpus bassae, mucronem dedit,/ lussitque iugulo infigi et sanguinem viri/ Purpureum fundi. . . / Primum pulvinar capiti suppositum trahit,/ Et ense iugulum nudum subito ferit. . . / Tunc volvi corpus languidum, membra trahi,/ Brachia iactari, donec faedatus suo/ Sanguine quiescit."

When Mustapha inquires about Hybrachimus's burial place, the messenger replies:

Your irate father denied him burial. He bade the body be stripped bare and in its foul condition be dragged to the great seashore, for a great stone to be tied to his tender feet, and for him to be thrown in the ocean.¹⁰¹

At this point, the reason for including Ibrahim's story is made clear. The abuse of the dead body of an earlier friend reaffirms the Western belief in the cruelty of the Turk.

By and large, the play basically repeats the details in Moffan's account. *Achmat* warns Mustapha to be careful and suggests that he flee. Mustapha, however, rejects the advice by saying: "So must I hide myself in furtive flight? Am I, who recently bore arms and dauntlessly overmastered the greatest captains, to live as a wretch hunting for bolt-holes?"¹⁰² Here again, Mustapha is depicted as an impatient youth, a proud character who refuses to listen to those more experienced than he. *Achmat* reminds him that "sweet love is all-convincing" and that "Hymen conveys great power."¹⁰³ He implies that Suleiman is controlled by his unbridled desire for his wife. Yet the message remains an allusion; it never develops into an open accusation as it was in the work of Moffan.

Mustapha's decision to see his father is due not to obedience but to the interpretation of his dream in which "the Prophet" told Mustapha that "before the third day has passed for [him], [he] will stand on happy feet with [the Prophet] in a better place, greater than mortal men."¹⁰⁴ Here the dream is also used to remind the reader of the greedy, proud nature of Mustapha, who hastily interprets it as an indication of his success. Suleiman's words before ordering his son's execution are "You two pashas, give Mustapha a lofty seat in the camp. A throne stands, bright with gold and

¹⁰¹ "Iratu ei sepulchrum denegat pater./ Nudari corpus iussit et sordidum trahi/ Ad pelagi vastum littus, ad molles pedes/ Ingens ligari saxum, et immergi salo."

¹⁰² "Egone corpus abdita tegam fuga?/ Qui nuper arma sustinui et summos duces/ Invictus domui, nunc quaeram latebras miser? . . . Quicumque constans virtutis decus petit,/ Haud ullos vanus affingit sibi metus."

¹⁰³ ". . . blandus omnia persuadet amor, . . . Adhuc ignoras, Hymeni quantus favor/ Et quanta improbitas insit?"

¹⁰⁴ Note the Christian motif of "three days."

picked out with glittering gems. Let this be my son's place, let him rest on that seat." This statement points up the difference between Mustapha's foolish hope and reality.¹⁰⁵

After the death of Mustapha, the chorus judges his fate:

[Mustapha] was bloodthirsty, rough, cruel, threatening, savage in war, and fierce in sharp battle. He could work harm, as by his savage vow he promised he would. But the ruler of the world preserves us by His help. He arms this father against his sons, hastening the enemies of virtue to their proper punishments.¹⁰⁶

This passage reasserts the stereotypical depictions of the Turk and repeats the moral lesson that Moffan placed in his work. The death of Mustapha was assisted by the "ruler of the world." The dichotomy of "us" versus the "enemy Other" is reaffirmed.

The most striking novelty of the play involves Mustapha's character. In the European accounts, Mustapha is depicted as a positive character, a brave, obedient man, a successful ruler, and a good soldier. In Moffan's work, delivering a moral lesson, he is described as a bloodthirsty Turk. However, in *Solymanndae*, only his weaknesses are presented. He is accused of the most severe flaw ancient heroes and good Christians can have, namely pride and excessive self-confidence.

This play, despite constant references to Ottoman society, makes statements about contemporary English society as well. The themes of absolute rule, state power, and religion are present throughout the play. In the scene where Suleiman is conflicted about his decision on Hybrachimus's fate, the anonymous author comments on the collaboration between state and clergy. The loyal counselor believes in the possibility of "the empire and the good faith." Such a statement from a Muslim had special meaning to the contemporary English audience, subjects of an excommunicated queen. They listened to Ajax's warning: "all men who

¹⁰⁵ "Vos gemini bassae, celsum vos Mustaphae date/ In castris solium. Stat fulgidus auro thronus/ Gemma distinctus nitida. sit filii locus,/ Illa quiescat sede."

¹⁰⁶ "At ille, summa cuncta qui statuit polo/ Legesque fati invictas immobiles regit,/ Bonos humana transfert ad fines mala. . . . Se vovit hostem populo perpetuo fore./ Erat cruentus, asper, immitis, minax,/ In Marte saevus, in praelio ferox gravi./ Poterat nocere, sese nociturum fero/ Admonuit voto. Nos orbis rector sacro/ Auxilio servat./ Armat in natos patrem/ Virtutis hostes poenas in proprias ciens."

want to adapt new laws should not cleave to that which can be touched or seen. Let them seek higher things. Often poison lurks hidden with gold, evil exists under an appearance of good."¹⁰⁷

When compared to its sources, *Solymanidae* presents an overtly negative image of the Turk as an ethnic type. The dominant themes—rage, absolute power over life and death, violence—not only towards the enemy but also within the family, figure as essential parts of the characters' ethnicity. Suleiman's persona alerts the audience to Ottoman cruelty, as well as to the dangers of absolute power.

Fulke Greville's *Mustapha* contains more nuanced depictions, although he too relies on Moffan's account and on Busbecq's letters. Greville's *Mustapha* is also a closet drama in the vein of Senecan tragedy.¹⁰⁸ It is filled with long interventions created by a character or the chorus in order to comment on political views, personal conflicts, or religion. *Mustapha*, in Greville's story, is more philosophically oriented than his sources or *Solymanidae*, written approximately fifteen years before *Mustapha*. As Bullough argues, Greville's treatment of the story takes it much further than a personal or dynastic struggle in the Ottoman court. Greville presents moral, political, and religious conflicts through which issues like statecraft, the absolute rule of a tyrant and obedience to him, and the weaknesses of individuals are disclosed.¹⁰⁹

The most striking difference between Greville's play and *Solymanidae* is the depiction of *Soliman*. Throughout the play, Soliman is depicted as a three-dimensional character, not simply a tyrant or a weak ruler. This Soliman knows his own weaknesses. He is not an ignorant or gullible man. He understands the hidden agendas of the people around him. He calls *Rosten* a "crafty slave" and accuses *Rosten* of trying to turn him against his son. The important point about the Soliman character here is that, similarly to Busbecq's account, his actions are explained not simply by his own nature but by the human condition. Greville's play is more involved in great human conflicts common to all than in retelling the specific story of the

¹⁰⁷ "Omnes qui cupiunt nova/ Suscipere iura, non id quod manibus premi/ Ante oculos cerni possit, debent sequi. Altiora quaerant. Saepe caelatum iacet/ In auro virus, sub specie boni malum,/ Utrunque pestis. Hinc salus, illinc fides."

¹⁰⁸ U.M. Ellis-Fermor, *The Jacobean Drama: An Interpretation* (London: Methuen, 1936), 191.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 193; Peter Ure, "Fulke Greville's Dramatic Characters," *Review of English Studies* 1, no. 4 (October 1950): 310.

Turkish sultan. His rational, less stereotypical representation of the ruler helps Greville to create a real person, representing a real theme.

Greville's divergence from his sources is used to insert discussions of political ideas. The message of the play—that all earthly power seeks absolutism, and that law and religion generally mitigate this—are the topics of the choruses and of the soliloquies as well. Such a discussion is first introduced by the chorus of "Bashas and Cadis":

We silly Bashas help power to confound,
With our own strength exhausting our own ground
An art of tyranny; which works with men
To make them beasts and high-raised thrones their den
Where they that mischief others, may retire
Safe with their prey and lifting tyrant higher.¹¹⁰

The chorus also speaks of "Christian courts of chancery" where, although the offices are distributed by titles and land, people are afraid to disobey, as they can be imprisoned for it. To have the same topic discussed by an officer and even a family member, Greville adds to the text the scenes between Soliman and *Camena* and between Soliman and *Achmat*. The two secondary characters discuss the issue of obedience to a tyrant and try to convince Soliman of Mustapha's innocence.

Achmat, as in the historical accounts and in the previous play, is a talented, experienced, and witty statesman. Achmat's dilemma is whether he should, "for [his] prince's sake, destroy succession / or suffer ruin to preserve succession."¹¹¹ In the end, as expected, he decides that although "sworn to [his] king and his honor," he is "First nature's subject than [his] princes."¹¹²

In a recent analysis of Greville's play, Burton emphasized the saintly qualities of *Camena*, Mustapha's sister. According to him, *Camena* adds a Christian angle to the issues discussed by others.¹¹³ She recognizes the evildoers and tries to persuade the father to be "merciful," reminding us of the characteristics of the ideal Christian prince. *Camena's* references to

¹¹⁰ Ure, "Fulke Greville's Dramatic Characters," 79.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹³ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 187.

virtue and her belief that pain “must be the guide” to virtue highlight her saintly image. Her role is to show the right path. This is stressed by her appearing together with Achmat and the chorus. Furthermore, Camena, as the victim of the wicked *Rossa*, highlights the choice between good and evil.

Rossa is the only character who does not change in the course of events. She is determined, strong, and bold, an ambitious mother who does everything to bring about the death of Mustapha and her own son's succession to the throne. However, in Greville's play, the reason for the plot is her own ambition to rule. Therefore, there is no direct reference to the practice of fratricide. Although it is mentioned by Achmat and the chorus that *Rossa* is plotting against Mustapha, Selim, *Rossa's* son, is excluded from the text. Her motivation is revealed when she claims:

... My chiefest end
Is, first, to fix this world on my succession;
Next so to alter, plant, remove, create. . .¹¹⁴

The emphasis on personal ambition and the removal of the issue of fratricide makes it easier for Greville to discuss political power and the theme of absolutism in a context less alien to the English audience.

Soliman's speech to his men is an important divergence from the main storyline as well. Talking to everyone around him and listening to their advice, Soliman, indecisive, asks for divine council. He declares that with God above him, he chose to be a tyrant for the sake of his empire. Despite God's words that “vengeance is his,” Soliman decides to kill his son. He says:

If God work thus, kings must look upwards still,
And from these powers they know not choose a will
Or else believe themselves their strength, occasion,
Make wisdom conscious and the world theirs sky.
So have all tyrants done, so must I.¹¹⁵

As this passage clearly states, Soliman's tyranny is not hereditary; it is the result of circumstances. When he speaks about God and religion, a Chris-

¹¹⁴ Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, 105.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

tian undertone can be detected from his words. Thus his ethnicity and religious identity are undermined in order to turn his conflicts into a concept more familiar to the English audience. The Ottoman setting notwithstanding, Soliman's Christianized message addresses the concerns of an English audience.¹¹⁶

Another Christianized character of the play is Mustapha himself. Mustapha is the good, successful, and innocent victim of cruelty. The only divergence from the story, in his case, is when his counselor advises him to rebel against his father. As in all other accounts, Mustapha rejects the option of fleeing from his father.¹¹⁷ His dialogue with a mediating priest highlights his righteousness and virtues in the face of the wickedness of that religious man. In the dialogue, Mustapha criticizes "Heli"—whose name reminds the audience of hell—for his "rage" and reminds him of the "wicked colors of desire" and the importance of "obedience" in times of confusion. The way Mustapha accepts his death is described by Achmat as "in haste to be an angel." His final words echo Christ:

O Father! Now forgive me.
 Forgive them too, that wrought my overthrow
 Let my grave never minister offences
 Since my father coveted my death
 Behold, with Joy I offer him my breath.¹¹⁸

Instead of getting "divine help" for his innocence, Mustapha is murdered. He obediently dies at the command of his father.

The issues that Greville inserted into the Suleyman-Mustafa narrative reflect the basic concerns of his age. This story is a good vehicle for reflecting on issues such as the struggle to overthrow a tyrant, monarchy and the individual, loyalty, honor, state power, and religion, as well as the role of state religion in controlling and oppressing the people. These topics, along with a desire for order, unity, and a safe future, were the basic concerns of the English people, living on the edge of a Catholic world, divided among themselves, confused by the changes in their country,

¹¹⁶ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 109.

¹¹⁷ Although Burton indicates a difference here, in Moffan's account, Mustapha refuses to flee from the father for the same reasons.

¹¹⁸ Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, 130.

and lacking an appropriate heir to the throne. The kingdom was the only strong pillar on which they could rely. By creating a less-Muslim, less-Ottoman milieu, Greville helped his audience connect the discussions to their own lives in England.

Still, the plot deals with the Ottoman court, depicting a Muslim state. Therefore, some comments on Ottoman ways were felt to be indispensable. Not surprisingly, Greville's criticisms are voiced through the choruses. The second chorus of "Mahomedan priests" accuses Muslims of destroying antiquities and houses of worship in order to build their own, filling the seraglio with pleasures, and poisoning their empire with their vices.¹¹⁹ Greville also makes use of stereotypes like the cruel and lustful Turk, recalling the Renaissance notion of the Turk as the "new barbarian."¹²⁰

The chorus of "Mahomedan priests" compares Christian and Muslim societies and lists the distinctive features of those two cultures. The puppet-prophet stereotype and the prejudices about the lustful, beastly Turk appear in the speeches of the five choruses, "the chorus of Bashas and Cadis," "the chorus of Mahomedan priests," "the chorus of Tartarorum," "the chorus of converts to Mahomedanism," and "the choruses of the others," by way of self-criticism.¹²¹ A feverishly debated topic of the age, why Christians tended to convert to Islam more frequently than Muslims did to Christianity, is also mentioned here. Criticism regarding relations with Muslims is directed to Muslim priests as they discuss differences between the two cultures:

Yet by our traffic with this dreaming nation,
Their conquered vice hath stained our conquering state,
And brought thin cobwebs into reputation,
Of tender subtlety; whose step mother Fate,
So inlays courage with ill-shadowing fear,
As makes it much more hard to than bear.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 96.

¹²⁰ For a detailed analysis of the "new barbarian" idea in the Renaissance texts, see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 43–94.

¹²¹ For stereotypical representations of the prophet in the medieval and early modern texts, see Tolan, *Saracens*, and Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*.

¹²² Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, 98.

The text reveals that some English perceived the confrontation with Mediterranean plurality and multicultural identities as dangerous and viewed the attraction of those new influences as a challenge to their own identity. Contemporary English authors criticized the practices of trading with the Turks or adopting Turkish dress, hairstyles, and facial hair.¹²³

Therefore nothing Turkish presented in the plays of the anonymous author or in Greville's play could be genuinely Turkish/Muslim and remain positive. The stereotypical figures were used by the anonymous author in order to reinforce his conviction that "the greatest things are in collapse." Although in Greville's play, the representations were more nuanced, they were not meant to depict the real Others either. The characters were merely literary tools for the author to make his point, probably in the hope of getting his work past the censors. In presenting the ideas of the Other, Greville did not or could not reach beyond the familiar stereotypes. Some other literary works might demonstrate that "notions of an English culture unwilling to accept positive representations of non-Christian peoples" are mistaken, but *Mustapha* would be the wrong example to use for such an argument.¹²⁴

* * *

An analysis of the anonymous Cambridge play *Solymannidae* and Fulke Greville's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* shows that the representation of the Ottomans on the sixteenth-century English stage was rarely influenced by the transforming rhetoric on the Turk that had emerged as a result of Anglo-Ottoman relations. A close reading of the two literary constructs of the Suleyman-Mustafa story challenges the alleged influence of transforming sixteenth-century rhetoric on the Turk upon the literary productions of the age.

An evaluation of the European sources dealing with the Eastern Other indicates that it is not possible to delineate continuity and coherence in how the early modern West depicts the East. European texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tend to have ambivalent representations of the East. Those range from sympathy and admiration to anxiety, fear, and hatred. The reason for these lies in the socioeconomic conditions

¹²³ Artemel, "The Idea of Turkey," 193.

¹²⁴ Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 194.

of the age, as well as each author's idiosyncratic responses to those conditions, and the demands of the given work. The two European and two English versions of the Suleyman-Mustafa story employ different discourses, and contrary to popular assumptions, in these cases, the European historical narratives represent a milder attitude towards the Other.

The analysis of Nicolas à Moffan's and Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's narratives of the Suleyman-Mustafa story proves there was a variety of sixteenth-century representations of the Turk in the European context. Comparing the English accounts with the Continental ones, this study challenges the assumptions that England was alone in producing nuanced representations of the Turk. It also shows that welcoming the newly emerging rhetoric on the Other was not the only response of sixteenth-century English playwrights to Anglo-Ottoman relations.

Accepting the importance and validity of completely new strategies in representing the Other as a result of alliances with the Turk, my research shows that there was at least one more result of Anglo-Ottoman relations. It was that, during this period, a stricter and more clear-cut rhetoric on the countries' mutual differences emerged, and several representations strongly criticized the influence of Mediterranean ways on English society.

Constructing a Self-Image in the Image of the Other:

*Pope Pius II's Letter to Sultan Mehmed II*¹

F. ÖZDEN MERCAN

You, an excellent man, illustrious scion of noble ancestors, famous for the glory of your deeds, endowed with a great empire, and eminent because of your many natural gifts. . .²

These complimentary remarks were written in 1461 by Pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini)³ in a letter to Sultan Mehmed II.⁴ In his letter Pius also compared the sultan to the Roman emperor Constantine the Great and offered him the legitimate rule of the whole Eastern kingdom if he would accept “a little bit of water” in baptism, embrace Christian rites, and believe in the Gospel.⁵ If Mehmed agreed, no leader in the world could

¹ This article is based on my MA thesis, “Constructing a Self-Image in the Image of the Other: Political and Religious Interpretations of Pope Pius II's Letter to Mehmed II (1461),” Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University (Budapest, May 2008). I would like to thank Professor Marianna D. Birnbaum and Professor Marcell Sebök for their comments and suggestions.

² Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), *Epistola ad Mahometem II*, ed. and trans. Albert R. Baca (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 38.

³ Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini was born in Siena in 1405. He was an influential figure and an important humanist of the Renaissance period. He was pope (Pius II) from 1458 until his death in 1464.

⁴ Mehmed II was the seventh sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He was born in Edirne in 1432. Mehmed II first came to throne at the age of twelve briefly, from 1444 to 1446, and then he ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1451 to 1481. In 1453 he conquered Constantinople, which brought an end to the Byzantine Empire. For this reason he was also known as the Conqueror.

⁵ *Epistola ad Mahometem II*, 17.

"surpass him in glory or equal him in power," and they would call him "ruler over the Greeks and the East"; he would possess legitimately what he had taken unjustly and by force.⁶

Given the pope's fierce opposition to the Ottomans, it is indeed puzzling that he lauded the sultan this way. Historians have written a great deal about this letter. Some scholars regarding the intentions of his message as sincere, have interpreted it as a change of attitude on the pope's part. Some scholars have claimed that, especially after the disappointment of the Council of Mantua, the pope might have lost hope of organizing a crusade against the Turks, and that prompted him to address the sultan directly.

For Richard Southern, it was a "magnificent composition" of a humanist, written with "the attempt of persuasion."⁷ Kenneth Setton likewise considers this letter a sincere attempt to convert Mehmed, suggesting that Pius thought Mehmed might convert "if only he could be made to understand that Christ was the redeemer."⁸ Franco Gaeta, despite posing some questions regarding to whom the letter was truly directed, concludes that it was really intended for Mehmed II.⁹

According to Franz Babinger, Pope Pius heard that, at Mehmed's request, Patriarch Gennadius had composed a treatise summarizing the principles of Christian teachings. This rumor implied that the sultan had shown an inclination towards Christianity.¹⁰ Moreover, because Mehmed's mother was Christian, it was claimed that she had educated him in Christian teachings and that "he could recite the *Pater Noster* by heart" as a child.¹¹ According to another rumor, the sultan was converted by his mother. Thus, in Babinger's view the pope wrote his letter sincerely hoping to convince Mehmed of the superiority of Christian teachings over Islam.¹²

⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁷ Richard Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 99.

⁸ Kenneth Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1978), 233.

⁹ Franco Gaeta, "Alcune osservazione sulla prima redazione della 'lettera a Maometto,'" in *Enea Silvio Piccolomini Papa Pio II*, ed. Domenico Maffei (Siena: Varese, 1968), 177–86.

¹⁰ Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 198.

¹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹² Franz Babinger, "Pio II e l'Oriente maomettano," in *Enea Silvio Piccolomini Papa Pio II*, ed. Domenico Maffei (Siena, 1968), 1–13; *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 198–99.

James Hankins argues that the pope wrote "in a mood of despair and within a well-established missionary tradition."¹³

In fact, the letter hardly seems to indicate a genuine intention to invite Mehmed II to embrace Christianity. Despite a few laudatory remarks, the tone is remarkably harsh. Moreover, although it was addressed to Mehmed II, the letter was never sent to him, and interestingly, it became known only after Pius's death.¹⁴ Even in his longest and most enduring work, the *Commentaries*, which was the story of his life, Pope Pius made no mention of this communication. Furthermore, none of the Ottoman sources mentions the receipt of such a letter.

These facts make the intended audience and purpose of the letter rather ambiguous. Some scholars argue that the letter was written for other purposes. Robert Schwoebel suggests that Pius meant it as a general warning to the Christian princes: if they refused to support the pope against the Turks, he would turn to Mehmed, the enemy, favor him, and recognize his authority in Eastern Europe.¹⁵ The fact that the letter came to light after Pius's death and was then widely circulated in Europe seems to strengthen Schwoebel's argument that it was actually intended for Christian princes.

Nancy Bisaha also provides us with a detailed discussion of the letter.¹⁶ She examines the letter in two contexts. First, she evaluates it within the context of Pius's other works and concludes that the letter cannot be regarded as a sincere attempt at conversion. Second, she compares the letter with other medieval and Renaissance conversion treatises and argues that, for various reasons, Pius's letter cannot be placed in the same category. In the end, she suggests that Pius's letter might have been

¹³ James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 129.

¹⁴ The letter was first published in Cologne in 1464; subsequent editions were published in Cologne in 1470, Treviso in 1475, and Rome in 1477. Babinger, "Pio II e l'Oriente maomettano," 9.

¹⁵ Robert Schwoebel claims that this letter is an exception to Pius's other works, which have a derisive attitude towards Turks. Concerning its purpose, he suggests that the Pope hoped to frighten the rulers of the West by proposing to legitimize the sultan's conquest of Byzantium in return for his conversion to Christianity. Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, c1967), 66.

¹⁶ Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II's Letter to Mehmed II: A Reexamination," *Crusades* 1 (2002): 183–200. She also discusses it in her book *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

written as propaganda for a new crusade, a warning for Christian princes, or just as a rhetorical piece.

This article focuses on the letter itself, trying not to repeat previous arguments but to point out some of the letter's other interesting features. First of all, as Bisaha rightly argues, except for a few compliments, the piece as a whole does not seem to be aimed at converting the sultan. Instead, Pope Pius intended this letter as a propaganda tool and ideological reinforcement for Christians in their struggle against the Ottomans. For this, he made use of medieval anti-Islamic polemical literature and provided a detailed refutation of Islam. It can be assumed that Pope Pius used the epistolary form to motivate the Christian princes since other methods of persuasion had proved fruitless. Pius's decision to write a letter instead of a treatise can be explained by contemporary trends in humanist rhetoric, as well as by his professional background.

Above all, Pius's training and career prepared him to fight his own battles by various rhetorical methods. Given that he started his career as a secretary in the imperial court of Frederick III and there composed scores of persuasive orations, letters, and other forms of propaganda and had served his patron as advocate, counselor, and ambassador, it can be argued that Piccolomini was experienced in inspiring and persuading through rhetoric, just like other humanist secretaries in his era. In fact, most Quattrocento secretaries had a background in the liberal arts, and some of them, including Pope Pius II, were scholars of considerable standing.¹⁷ By studying and adopting ancient techniques of rhetorical argumentation, the humanists developed an effective device to use in contemporary struggles for political survival.¹⁸ In this context, it is hard to imagine that Pope Pius honestly intended to appeal to Mehmed with the rhetorical force of his letter. Rather, the epistolary genre gave him the opportunity to voice his ideas concerning the Ottomans and Islam to his Christian audience.

The article is organized into three main parts. The first part discusses Pope Pius's attitude towards Ottomans in the context of his works; the second part compares a "real" conversion letter by Pope Alexander III to the Seljuk Sultan Kilij Arslan II (1179) with Pius's letter; and the last part deals with the sources and themes of Pius's letter.

¹⁷ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 8.

¹⁸ Margaret Meserve, "Introduction," in *Pius II: Commentaries*, ed. Margaret Meserve, and Marcello Simonetta (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1:xv–xviii.

Piccolomini and the Turks

Throughout his life, Pope Pius II fervently supported and promoted the idea of a new crusade against the Turks. He first emphasized the Ottoman threat at the Council of Basel in 1436. After the fall of Constantinople, he wrote letters to Popes Nicholas V and Calixtus III to organize or lead a crusade against the Turks. When he became pope in 1458, one of his first acts was to invite several Christian princes to Mantua with the aim of organizing a large-scale crusade. The meeting did not yield any results, yet the pope proceeded with his plans. These also ended in failure; he died in Ancona in 1464, about to embark upon the crusade he had organized on his own.¹⁹ Consequently, Pius II, as a humanist scholar and pope, used all his skills—literary, rhetorical, diplomatic, and political—to promote the idea of the crusade.

In his autobiographical *Commentaries* (1458–1464), Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini called the Turks the destroyers of ancient Greek heritage and civilization. He derided Islam as heretical, describing how this “race,” which had migrated from eastern Scythia, besieged and sacked Constantinople. According to Piccolomini, Mehmed, the ruler of the Turks, resolved to defeat all Christian peoples and annihilate the Holy Scripture and the divine law of Christ because, as a nation, the Turks were “foes of the Trinity.”²⁰ They followed a certain false prophet called Mohammed, “an Arab imbued with gentile error and Jewish perfidy, who listened to Christians infected with Nestorianism and Arianism.”²¹ Thus Mohammed was acquainted with the Old and the New Testaments, but he perverted them both. He claimed that he was a prophet who talked to angels, and he cast such a spell over ignorant people that he was able to give them a new law and persuade them to abandon Christ, the Savior.

Concerning Islam, Pope Pius followed the arguments of the medieval Christian polemicists.²² He said the Prophet Mohammed made use

¹⁹ Nancy Bisaha, “Pope Pius II and the Crusade,” in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2004), 39–52.

²⁰ Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), *The Commentaries of Pius II*, trans. Florence Alden Gragg and introduction by Leona Gabel (Northampton: Smith College Studies in History, 1940), book 2, 116.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Medieval Christian polemicists’ approach to Islam is discussed in detail in the following pages.

of magic, and that by permitting lust and incest, he easily won over the common people, who were seduced by sensual pleasures. Although Mohammed's law admitted that Christ was inspired by God, born of a virgin, and able to perform miracles, it denied that "He was divine and that He suffered the agony of death for our redemption."²³ According to Pius, the influence of this "monstrous doctrine" made its way into Europe with the Turks.²⁴ Thus victory over the Turks seemed to him a fundamental task for all Christendom.

In his geographical treatises *Europe* and *Asia*, Pius traced the Turks' origins back to the Scythians and emphasized their barbarous and violent nature.²⁵ In fact, from the 1450s on, humanists such as Aeneas Silvius, Francesco Filelfo, Flavio Biondo, and Niccolo Sagundino sought to highlight the barbarity of the Turks by developing a historical narrative of identity that firmly placed the Turks outside of classical civilizations.²⁶ They also located the ancient Turks in Scythia and fixed their early history in an established pattern of barbarous behavior. Differing from most of their humanist contemporaries in terms of sources and methods, these humanists presented a historical account of the Turks' origins, "identifying their genetic forebears rather than simply likening them by analogy to notorious barbarian invaders of ages past."²⁷

In order to verify their historical accounts, they provided references from various medieval sources: Theophanes's *Chronographia*, Otto of Freising's world chronicle, and the apocalyptic *Cosmographia* of Aethicus.²⁸

²³ *The Commentaries of Pius II*, book 2, 116.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Pius wrote *Europe* and *Asia* in 1458 and 1460–1462, respectively, after his election to the papacy. According to Meserve, they were intended at least in part to support the crusade project. *Asia* traverses the continent from east to west, starting with the distant lands of the ancient Seres, passing through Scythia and the countries of the Caucasus, and ending with the ancient kingdoms of Parthia, Armenia, and the Mediterranean provinces of Asia Minor. This work was unfinished; the part from India, Persia, and Arabia to Syria and the Holy Land was never written. Margaret Meserve, "From Samarkand to Scythia: Reinventions of Asia in Renaissance Geography and Political Thought," in *Pius II, "El Piu Expeditivo Pontifice": Selected Studies on Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini*, ed. Zweder Von Martels (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17.

²⁶ In her book *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), Margaret Meserve examines in detail how humanist historians developed the theory of Scythian ancestry for the Turks.

²⁷ Meserve, *Empires of Islam*, 115.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

This scholarly enterprise intended to prove the Turks' uncivilized ancestry and inborn savage character.²⁹ In his *Asia*, Pius drew a connection between the Turks and the Scythians, describing the Scythians as "a fierce and ignominious people, fornicators, engaging in all manner of lewdness and frequenters of brothels, who ate detestable things: the flesh of mares, wolves, vultures, and what is even more horrifying aborted human fetuses."³⁰ The description of Scythians as a savage and uncouth people and their association with the Turks contributed greatly to constructing the image of the Turks as immoral and backward. This emphasis on their barbarity added a different angle to the image of the Turks, who were already depicted as infidels and the enemies of the Cross, and it drew a clear distinction between Western civilization and Ottoman barbarity.³¹ Against the backdrop of those works and tenets, it sounds surprising that Pope Pius II wrote a letter to Sultan Mehmed II aiming to convert him to Christianity. In fact, a comparison of this letter with another papal conversion letter shows that the one thing Pius's letter could not be was a conversion letter.

Letter of Pope Alexander III to Kilij Arslan II

In 1179 Peter of Blois wrote a letter in the name of and at the instruction of Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) to the sultan of Iconium (Konya), Kilij Arslan II (1156–1192).³² As the beginning of the letter emphasized, it was written in response to Kilij Arslan's request for instruction in the Christian faith. Furthermore, unlike Pius's epistle, it was actually sent to its declared addressee.

²⁹ Margaret Meserve, "Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2004), 27; Nancy Bisaha, "'New Barbarian' or Worthy Adversary? Humanist Constructs of the Ottoman Turks in Fifteenth-Century Italy," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David Blanks (London: Macmillan, 1999), 197–203.

³⁰ Pius's reasons for inquiring into the geography and history of Scythia were certainly due to his intention to vilify the Turks as barbarian Scythians and thus to strengthen his case for mounting a military expedition against them. Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," 46.

³¹ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 85–87.

³² Alexander III, "De Instructione Fidei Catholicae," in *Petrus Blessensis, Opera omnia, Patrologia Latina* vol. 207, coll. [1069–78].

It is unknown, however, why the sultan would have made such a request. According to Claude Cahen, Kilij Arslan II and Kaykhusraw I corresponded with the popes of their day for political reasons.³³ Whether their relations with the Byzantines were good or bad, the sultans saw no harm if "Latin propagandists came to compete with the Byzantine clergy for influence over their Greek subjects."³⁴ From this argument, it can be assumed that Kilij Arslan's request might have been motivated by politics rather than by a sincere intention to become a Christian. On the other hand, the *Chronicle of Otto of St. Blaisen* (1187–1197) suggests that Kilij Arslan was prepared to convert himself and his subjects to Christianity in order to obtain a marriage alliance with Frederick Barbarossa (1155–1190).³⁵ Frederick reluctantly agreed, but that marriage never happened, as his daughter died soon after the contract. Thus the pope might have taken this prospect seriously and responded enthusiastically to the sultan's request for instruction in the Catholic faith.

Looking at the content of Peter of Blois's letter, we find that its themes focus on the main tenets of Christianity. Addressed as one of the crucial differences between Islam and Christianity is the idea of the Holy Trinity. In the letter, Peter of Blois elaborates on this theme. He shows proof from the Scriptures, and his rational explanations are intended to be mere illustrations. He suggests, "we call mind memory, intelligence, and will, but they are one mind; memory is not intelligence or will."³⁶ Through this metaphor, he attempts to explain the idea of the Trinity. Just like mind, which without intelligence or memory cannot be described as mind, there are three enti-

³³ Kaykhusraw I was the youngest son of Kilij Arslan II; he succeeded his father in 1192 and ruled until 1196, when he fought his brothers for control of the sultanate. He ruled again from 1205 to 1211.

³⁴ Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071–1330*, trans. J. Jones-Williams (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1968), 214.

³⁵ A. Hofmeister, ed., *Ottomanis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, (Hanover, 1912), 37: "Soldanus rex Iconii missis as Fridricum imperatorem legatis quamvis paganus cum suis omnibus fedus cum eo pepigit filiamque eius matrimonio sibi coniungi postulavit ac se Christianum cum sua gente fieri, si adipisceretur imperatoris filiam, sponte promisit. Imperator autem, licet filiam tenere diligeret vixque postulata concederet, tamen consensit eamque sibi dare promittens prius tamen mortuam luxit, quam petenti dederit." This chronicle was written around 1209–1210.

³⁶ Alexander III, "De Instructione Fidei Catholicae," 1071: "mentem autem vocamus memoriam, mentem dicimus intelligentiam, mentem dicimus voluntatem; memoria, intelligentia et voluntas sunt una mens; sed nec memoria est intelligentia, vel voluntas."

ties within God: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. All have equal status and are divinely equal and without the Son or Holy Spirit cannot be comprehended.

Peter of Blois was aware that this doctrine of Christianity was beyond the understanding of the rational human mind. Thus he says, "it [the idea of Trinity] is difficult to comprehend and it exceeds the power of human reason, but the more complicated it is for belief, the more it deserves to be believed in."³⁷ Together with this idea of the Trinity, Peter of Blois also speaks of the virgin birth of Christ, the divine and human natures of Christ, his resurrection, and his redemption of mankind. His focus is on the main doctrines of Christianity: Peter says nothing about Islam or Islamic teachings.

Peter of Blois was already aware that Muslims rejected these doctrines, especially the idea of the Trinity and the divine essence of Christ, and formed his own arguments accordingly. For example, in some places, he adopted a tone of rebuke. Concerning the crucifixion of Christ, he says:

Indeed inhuman and cruel is the one who does not appreciate his compassion, the one who does not love such a merciful Lord out of true feelings, and the one who does not expose himself to the peril of death, if necessary, for him.³⁸

In Islam, Christ is recognized as a prophet, but Muslims do not believe that Christ was crucified; according to them, he ascended to heaven directly. Thus here Peter may have meant to criticize this belief implicitly. He says, "the infidels and the sinners will be ashamed, who burst into these insanities: if Christ was a God, how could he have died? If he was a man, how could he have been resurrected?"³⁹ The "infidels" here are the Muslims, and the "sinners" are often the Jews, who are considered a part of the faith but who refuse to accept Christ as the Savior. Although the letter is not polemical in tone, when introducing the main tenets of the Catholic faith, Peter emphasizes points that were known to cause controversy between Christian and Muslim theologians.

³⁷ Ibid.: "res quidem difficilis est intellectu, et aciem rationis humanae transcendit, sed tanto elegantius habet fidei meritum, quanto difficilior est ad credendum."

³⁸ Ibid., 1075: "Sane inhumanus est et crudelis, qui misericordiam ejus non recolit, qui Dominum tam clementem ex affectu non diligit, qui se pro eo, si opus est, mortis periculo desiderabiliter non exponit."

³⁹ Ibid., 1076: "erubescant infidelis et praevaricatores, qui inordinate in haec prorumpunt deliramenta: si Christus Deus fuit, quomodo potuit mori! Si homo, quomodo resurgere?"

Still, aside from these two examples, there is no implicit or explicit attack on Islam. On the contrary, Peter tries to emphasize the common points between Islam and Christianity. While referring to biblical figures such as John the Baptist and Isaiah, he emphasizes that these prophets are also accepted by the sultan, implying that Peter of Blois was familiar with basic Islamic teaching when he wrote the letter.⁴⁰

Peter's familiarity, one can argue, came from the translations of Peter the Venerable, the learned abbot of Cluny, who around 1142 commissioned Robert of Ketton to translate the Koran into Latin. He himself also wrote a summary of Islamic teachings and a refutation.⁴¹ These two works, together with the translations known as the *Toledan Collection*, were the first scholarly works in Latin about Islam. From this time onwards in the West, Christians began to learn about Islam and to take it seriously as a religious threat rather than simply treating it as pagan idolatry.

Just like Eastern Christians, who had already established a long tradition of polemics against Islam as a heretical sect, Peter the Venerable also classified Islam as a "heresy" and tried to refute it "using the tools of anti-heretical argument."⁴² Throughout the Middle Ages, these translations and the refutation of their tenets were used as authoritative sources on Islam. In his *Summa*, Peter the Venerable established basic similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam, saying:

They [Muslims] do not believe that Christ, though conceived of the Holy Spirit, is the son of God, or God, but [only that he is] a good prophet, most true, free from all falsehood and sin, the son of Mary, born without a father, and never having died because it was not fitting that he should die. On the contrary, they believe that, when Jews wanted to kill him, he ascended to the heavens.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1071–72: "quem recipis."

⁴¹ Peter the Venerable composed two treatises using these translations: the first one, *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*, describes Islam and degrades it to a Christian audience; the second one, *Contra sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum*, tries to refute Islam and orders Muslims to convert to Christianity.

⁴² John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 137.

⁴³ James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 119–20.

Peter the Venerable pointed out that Muslims denied the incarnation, the redemption, and the resurrection of Christ but accepted the virgin birth and the ascension.

As Peter of Blois elaborated these points in his letter as well, it was possible that he had access to the works and translations of Peter the Venerable. At the end of his letter, he suggests to the sultan that to emerge from the darkness into light, he should be baptized and become a Christian. Although Pius's letter also emphasizes that "a little bit of water" (baptism) was enough for Mehmed to become Christian, both the style and content of the letter as a whole differ profoundly from the letter of Peter of Blois, which was written with the sincere desire of converting the addressee. Peter of Blois was clearly aware of the polemical issues between Christianity and Islam in his era, but for his own reasons he adopted a constructive and peaceful approach towards the Muslims.

Pope Pius's Letter

Certain parts of Pius's letter indicate a conciliatory attitude. For example, it emphasizes the shared beliefs between Islam and Christianity. Pius states:

We think that you confess and believe in one God who created the earth and who cares for everything he fashioned in the world. We do not think you are unaware that human souls are immortal and that when they leave our bodies they are taken to other regions where the good receive a happy abode and the bad are borne off to punishment. This is not only written in our New Testament and the prophets, but your religion holds the same.⁴⁴

While emphasizing these points, he also refers to ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who, Pius claimed, shared the views of Christians concerning the governance of the world, the immortality of the soul, and God.⁴⁵ In fact, this association of Christian beliefs with ancient Greek philosophy allowed Pius to try to prove the superiority of Christianity.

⁴⁴ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

Pius also emphasizes that both Christians and Muslims believe in the Old Testament and accept the prophets Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. He is aware that Mehmed also accepts Christ as a holy man inspired by God, a great prophet, and a famous miracle-worker.⁴⁶ Christians and Muslims both believe that those who worship idols are in grievous error. Up to this point, Pius claims, Christianity and Islam do not differ. On the whole, the statements related to common points in Islam and Christianity display a conciliatory approach.

Pius still regards Mehmed as a creature of God and his lamb but claims he “went astray and fed beyond his home in other pastures far from the Lord’s fold.”⁴⁷ This demonstrates that Pius regards Islam as a heresy rather than a separate monotheistic religion, and Mehmed as a potential Christian, but one whose faith had been corrupted. Pius’s concern for Mehmed culminates in his statement:

We grieve that you, an excellent man, do not walk in the paths of the Lord, do not know his commandments, and do not live according to his law. We feel sorry for you and deplore the unhappiness of your subjects who perish with you. We do not believe you willingly go astray since we have faith that your nature is good. The ignorance of the truth holds you back.⁴⁸

The proselytizing approach displayed at the beginning of Pius’s letter is reinforced by historical examples. He defends the advantages and reputation of conversion to Christianity through the example of Constantine, among other rulers: “But why do we delay and not mention the greatest example of all? The Emperor and Monarch Constantine himself opened the way which you and all like you could have entered without delay.”⁴⁹ Pius depicts Constantine as a ruler who achieved glory by converting to Christianity. By comparing Constantine with Mehmed, Pius implies that such glory would also be possible for Mehmed if he converted.⁵⁰ In fact, this association of Mehmed with Constantine also refers to the associa-

⁴⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁰ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 148–49.

tion of the Romans with the Ottomans. Pius writes, "just as the Romans became Christians with their emperor, so the Turks will become Christians with Mehmed."⁵¹ This approach is remarkable, especially given the pope's claims in his previous works about the Turks' barbaric origins.

The use of historical examples provided Pius with a rhetorical arena to promote his own goals. The analogy drawn between the heroes of antiquity and the Ottoman sultan helped create a heroic image of Mehmed. However, as Soykut suggests, with the "heroification of Mehmed," Pius's aim was actually to set the Christian rulers against the Ottomans, warning them of a forthcoming Turkish offensive.⁵²

The letter alternates between remarks of spite and praise for the Ottomans. On the one hand, Pius compares Mehmed with Constantine the Great in terms of his bravery and strength. Moreover, he makes a clear distinction between the Ottomans and other Muslims by praising the Scythian origins of the Turks: "compared to effeminate Egyptians and unwarlike Arabs, Turks are originally Scythians who were known for their bravery."⁵³ On the other hand, Pius denounces Mehmed as the archenemy of the Christian faith. These conflicting remarks serve as reminders for Christian princes that they should unite and stand together against the common enemy.

Though there are a few remarks that can be interpreted positively at face value, in many passages of the letter, Pius's tone towards Mehmed and Islam is hostile and condescending. He unambiguously regards Mehmed as the enemy of Christendom and persecutor of Christians.⁵⁴ He challenges Mehmed, warning him to be aware of the greatness of the Christian people and telling him he cannot compete with "the strength of Spain, the warlike spirit of France, the vast populace of Germany, the bravery of Britain, the boldness of Poland, the tenacity of Hungary, and the wealth, energy and experience in warfare of Italy."⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 27.

⁵² Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy: A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe, 1453–1683* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001), 25.

⁵³ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 74.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

Pius threatens the Turkish ruler when he says that all Christians will unite if they ever hear that Mehmed is approaching the heartland of Christendom.

You cannot do anything better for peace among Christians than invade Christendom with great, strong forces, for all private hatreds will stop when a threat to all is sensed; with combined forces arms will be taken up against a common enemy.⁵⁶

With the hope of encouraging the Italian states and rousing them to join the desired crusading spirit, Pius reminds the sultan of the invincibility of the Italians. He claims:

Your ancestors never possessed or saw Italy. You have no right to it and if you insist on invading Italy you will realize you are fighting with men. . . . The nature, strength, talent, and courage of Italy are different. They who are used to ruling cannot be subjugated and all of Italy is now filled with horses and men. It does not lack of money which is called the sinews of war.⁵⁷

Pius's reflection on Italian unity and strength was unrealistic. He had a strong sense of his own Italian identity and of Italian superiority, as demonstrated throughout his letter. However, he was also aware that the Italian states were not strong enough to resist the Ottomans. The real situation of the Italian states and all the European powers was far from the letter's projected image of "strong unity." Pius himself had learned from his relations with the Christian states that they never sacrificed individual advantage for mutual gain. This is well illustrated in his antipathies toward several Italian city-states, notably Venice and Florence. Their ambitions to dominate Italy had led to conflicts and fights that made the long-desired unity impossible. Even in the context of an outside threat like that posed by the Ottomans, the idea of unity remained remote. Therefore, by constructing a powerful and unified image of Italy against the Ottomans, Pius aimed more to encourage the Italians than to threaten the Turks.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Pope Pius, European Politics, and Ottoman Expansion in the Fifteenth Century

Pius wrote his letter in order to express some concerns and attitudes of his time. Although fifteenth-century Europe had no hold over the Ottomans, Pius's emphasis on the superiority of the West and Christendom sought to evoke a sense of European authority over the Islamic Ottoman Empire. One of the main themes of Pius's letter is "the emphasis on the necessity for undertaking war against the Turk, and the ease with which victories could be won."⁵⁸

Pius elaborates on the same point in his *Commentaries*. In his opinion, Christians had always had more courage than the Turks, and they would have never been defeated unless they were betrayed or faced overwhelming odds, were battle-weary, or the Lord was angry at them for their sins. But if they joined forces, even a united Italy, not to mention all of Christendom, could wipe out the Turks. Accordingly, nothing helped the enemy so much as dissent among the Christians themselves, "who preferred by attacking one another to avenge private rather than public wrongs and to assail the household of the Faith more fiercely than the foreign foe."⁵⁹

These passages are revealing: they demonstrate that Pius's letter was indeed intended to address the Christian princes rather than Mehmed. They should be interpreted as encouragement, emphasizing that if the princes united against the Turks, they could defeat them, while cautioning that Mehmed could conquer Italy in case of discord. Thus the letter can be read as a subtle warning.

In fact, Pius's anxiety was well-founded, because Mehmed was indeed planning to organize a military attack on Italy. One contemporary, Niccolo Sanguindo, reported that the sultan believed Constantinople to be the daughter of Rome, and having won the daughter, he also hoped to gain the mother.⁶⁰ Sanguindo was right, as in 1480 the Ottoman army, under

⁵⁸ Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 120. Although Hankins derived this theme from the writings of the humanist proponents of crusade, which in his view did not include Pius's letter, the analysis of the letter shows that the same idea exists in the letter, too.

⁵⁹ *The Commentaries of Pius II*, book 3, pp. 214–15.

⁶⁰ Charles Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.

the leadership of Ahmet Gedik Pasha, attacked and occupied Otranto. But after Mehmed died, the wider plan could not be carried out.⁶¹ In his letter Pius warns Mehmed, saying that he could never subjugate the Christians because "there is no one who wants to be subject to a non-Christian master and all [Christians] want to die in the orthodox faith."⁶² If Mehmed attempted to do this, no one would leave his religion, and Mehmed would not be able to accomplish in Europe what his ancestors had done with the Byzantines. Pius's attitude towards the Byzantines is ambivalent throughout the letter. On the one hand, he criticizes the Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites, and Maronites, saying that they cannot be considered Christians, as their beliefs are not consistent with the correct faith. He states, "very few are the Christians under your rule who walk in the truth of the New Testament, all are imbued with error to some degree."⁶³ In Pius's view, the Greeks abandoned the unity of the Roman Church after the fall of Constantinople, and they did not accept the Florentine Agreement.⁶⁴ Their beliefs regarding the Holy Spirit and the fires of purgatory were not consistent with the correct faith. Thus Pius believed—and he was not alone in this regard—that the Byzantines deserved to live under Ottoman rule, as they insisted on their erroneous doctrine and resisted papal authority.

Pius, however, declared that he was also concerned with the plight of the Eastern Christians. He depicts Christians as miserable and oppressed under the rule of Mehmed. He says that Christians were forced into slavery and often compelled to renounce their religion.⁶⁵ He adds:

They are looked upon as the vilest property, pay heavy tribute and are afflicted with injustices daily. They are led off to war against their will, are exposed to death without weapons, and are deprived of their wives and children. Moreover, after they raise their sons, they

⁶¹ Halil İnalcık, "The Ottoman Turks and the Crusades, 1451–1522," in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 6, ed. Kenneth Setton (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 330–31.

⁶² *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 14.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁴ The Council of Florence (1438–1445) attempted to unite the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman papacy. In the end, it failed, as most of the Byzantines opposed such a union.

⁶⁵ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 23.

lose them. Their boys are taken off to the palace, circumcised and instructed in the rites of Mohammed.⁶⁶

Pius portrays the Ottomans as fanatical Muslims who had an unappeasable desire to subjugate the Christians and destroy the Christian faith by violent and cruel means. He calls them uncivilized because of such practices as the *devşirme*.⁶⁷ With such images, Pius again tried to inspire the princes of the West to act and save their fellow Christians from the yoke of the Ottomans. The fate depicted by Pius of the Christians under Ottoman rule did not fully correspond to the actual situation. As a matter of fact, it shows Pius's lack of interest in the various actions and aspects of Ottoman rule. His main purpose is to revive the crusading spirit of the Christian world.

Much of Pius's letter comprises a detailed refutation of Islam. While discussing Islam, the pope takes a tone that hardly reflects friendly and kindly attitudes to its alleged addressee. Pius regards Islam as a promoter of chaos and discord and says that Christianity, in contrast, stands for the desired peace: "It is impossible for unity to take place under Mohammedan law. Under Christian law it can easily come about."⁶⁸ His approach to Mehmed is more critical than persuasive. All things considered, Pius was skilled in oratory and famous for his persuasive rhetoric, and he would have used stronger rhetoric if he had truly wanted to convince Mehmed to convert.

Pope Pius II and Medieval Anti-Islamic Polemical Literature

From the beginning, Pius based his arguments on an essential distinction between East and West while justifying European superiority, which was associated with Christianity, over the Ottomans and Islam. He declares:

You believe only Mohammed and his Koran. You follow a man who died without witnesses, to no purpose, without miracles; we believe in a living being, Christ, who even in your teachings, is admitted to

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24–25.

⁶⁷ This refers to the levy of Christian children to be trained for posts in the palace, the administration, or the *kapikulu* military corps.

⁶⁸ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 20.

be alive. We lend our ears to God and are guided by holy writings, proofs and witnesses.⁶⁹

In addition, he asserts that the Prophet Mohammed did not have enough understanding of faith, and he adds, "nor have you, up to now, learned enough."⁷⁰ Concerning Islam, Pius says:

Your doctrine is not supported by arguments or reasons, but is based on the force of arms alone; it does not hope to convince through reasoned debate but instead fears defeat. There are no Christians who can be defeated in war or deceived by arguments, since they both excel in arms and are fortified by the arguments not only of divine scripture but of philosophy as well.⁷¹

Such references to the Ottomans and Islam reflect the influence and use of medieval polemical rhetoric and do not demonstrate much innovation on the part of Pope Pius. While dealing with Islam and the Prophet Mohammed, Pius focuses on similar points as medieval polemicists had, drawing on common medieval polemical devices. In this sense, it is more convincing to categorize Pius's writing as an anti-Islamic polemical text camouflaged as a conversion letter.

The term "polemic" refers to argumentation composed to refute or show the falsity of another's position.⁷² The medieval anti-Islamic polemical texts were generally devised as *apology* (defense of Christianity), followed by *polemics* (consisting of attacks on Islam). Pope Pius's letter belongs to this genre. First, he defends certain Christian doctrines; thereafter, he refutes Islam mostly using charges that had already been repeatedly leveled against the Prophet and his religion. Thus his views can be considered to be a continuation of the medieval discourse on Islam. The main sources he used in formulating his letter were the works of Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Torquemada.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 35.

⁷¹ Ibid., 20.

⁷² Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993), 294–95.

Nicholas of Cusa

One of the main sources for Pope Pius's letter is the *Cribratio Alkorani*, written in 1460 by the German cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) at the request of Pope Pius himself. In this work, Nicholas of Cusa examined the Koran point by point, demonstrating the common points as well as the discrepancies between Christian and Islamic doctrines. Some scholars interpret his attitude as taking a respectful approach to the Koran, acknowledging that the Muslim faith also contained the revealed word of God. It is true that both John of Segovia⁷³ and Nicholas of Cusa believed in the necessity of a clear understanding of the Koran, and thus in the need for a revised translation and interpretation.⁷⁴ However, it can be said that their concern was to demonstrate the errors of Islam—just as Peter the Venerable had three centuries earlier.

In the *Cribratio*, Nicholas of Cusa deals only with Islam and its doctrines. He systematically analyzes the Koran by breaking it up into its various elements, identifying issues that separate Islam and Christianity. Cusa's text sets out to prove that the parts that were in agreement with the tenets of Christianity were necessarily taken from the Gospel, whereas all that was false stemmed from Mohammed's evil.

While composing his work, Nicholas of Cusa too borrowed from medieval polemical sources. In the introduction to his work, he claims that, in Basel, he obtained Robert of Ketton's translation of the Koran.⁷⁵ He adds that together with the Koran, he had a chance to acquire the translation of al-Kindi's *Apology*. The *Apology* or *Risalah* of al-Kindi was a very important source, as much of what Western Christians knew of Islam and the Prophet Mohammed came from this work, which criticized Islam. It was attributed

⁷³ John of Segovia spent many years on a revised and accurate translation of the Koran, though in the end he could not achieve this. Southern, *Western Views of Islam*, 103–4.

⁷⁴ Southern, *Western Views of Islam*, 88–90; N. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 144; R. Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion and the Crusade Against the Turks," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 175–79.

⁷⁵ Nicholas of Cusa, *De Pace Fidei and Cribratio Alkorani*, ed. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: Arthur J. Banning Press, 1990), 965.

to the Arab Christian Abd al-Masih ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, though this is still a matter of debate among scholars.⁷⁶

In his work, al-Kindi presents a defense of Christianity and a detailed refutation of Islam. He justifies Christian doctrines while attacking various aspects of Islam. According to al-Kindi, Mohammed was not a prophet, as he did not have any divine signs, did not perform any miracles, and spread his religion only by the sword and violence. Al-Kindi also questions the Koran's claim to be the Word of God, arguing that it was composed by Mohammed with the help of a heretical Christian monk, Sergius (Nestorius), and two Jews, Abd Allah b. Sallam and Ka'b al-Ahbar. Moreover, he says that the text had not been accurately transmitted and preserved.⁷⁷ The *Apology* of al-Kindi became known in the West only in the mid-twelfth century, when it was translated from Arabic into Latin by Peter of Toledo, under the patronage of Peter the Venerable.⁷⁸

In addition to these sources, Nicholas of Cusa also claims that during his mission to Constantinople in 1437, he found in the Dominican convent in Pera the writings of John of Damascus refuting Islam.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ It is assumed that al-Kindi wrote his *Apology* around 830 at the court of the caliph al-Ma'mun as a response to a conversion-to-Islam letter from a Muslim friend, al-Hashimi. William Muir, "The Apology of Al-Kindi: An Essay on its Age and Authorship," in *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries, 632–900 AD: Translations and Commentary*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 365–77. Concerning the discussions related to the authorship of the *Apology*, see Tolan, *Saracens*, 40–68.

⁷⁷ *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, trans. Anton Tien in *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, 381–516.

⁷⁸ These two works, the translation of the Koran and the *Apology* of Al-Kindi, are particularly important because they were used by various later Christian polemicists against Islam, including Nicholas of Cusa. In particular, the portrayal of Islam in the *Apology* of Al-Kindi was elaborated and used for different purposes in the following centuries.

⁷⁹ John of Damascus was one of the most influential anti-Muslim writers during the eighth century. He was a Melkite presbyter and monk, and he wrote on a variety of theological issues. He was also one of the chief financial administrators of the Umayyad caliphs Abd al-Malik (685–705) and Walid I (705–715). This allowed him to acquire firsthand knowledge of Muslim beliefs and religious practices, including some acquaintance with the Koran. On the basis of this familiarity, he suggested that Muslims had some common beliefs with Christians but that on most points, the two communities differed. He concluded that these similarities and differences demonstrated Islam to be a Christian heresy. Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000), 38–39.

John of Damascus wrote *Fount of Knowledge* and *Disputation between a Saracen and a Christian*, which contributed greatly to the formation of an apologetic Christian response to Islam. In his *Fount of Knowledge*, he wrote a section entitled *On the Heresies*, where he stated that the Koran recognized Christ as the Word of God and his servant, miraculously conceived but not crucified. This was one of the main points that made John of Damascus interpret Islam as a heresy. Moreover, he asserted that Mohammed came to the Old and New Testaments through an Arian monk and, with the help of this monk, he formed a heresy of his own.⁸⁰ The description of Mohammed as an Arian or Nestorian heretic was later exploited by many medieval and Renaissance polemicists, including Nicholas of Cusa and Pope Pius II. In their writings, they refuted Islam using the tools of anti-heretical argumentation.⁸¹

Other polemical texts that Nicholas of Cusa mentioned in the introduction to *Cribratio Alkorani* were *Contra Legem Sarracenorum* by a Dominican friar, Riccoldo de Montecroce, and *Contra errores perfidi Machometi*, the work of another Dominican friar (and later Spanish cardinal), Juan de Torquemada. In his work, Riccoldo de Montecroce sought to comprehensively refute the Koran as a sacred text. Montecroce largely made use of earlier polemical treatises, especially those of Peter the Venerable.⁸² His work became one of the most widely read anti-Islamic treatises between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century. His portrayal of Muslims as violent fanatics who were resistant to reason and who could only be overcome by force was adopted by many later polemicists.⁸³

All these medieval polemical texts apparently became available to Nicholas of Cusa in various ways, and he used them in his *Cribratio*. Like al-Kindi and Peter the Venerable, Nicholas of Cusa regarded Islam as a Nestorian heresy developed by a monk called Sergius, who converted Mohammed from idolatry to Nestorian Christianity. However, some senti-

⁸⁰ Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 133–41.

⁸¹ Tolan, *Saracens*, 137.

⁸² Ibid., 251. Peter the Venerable himself wrote two works on Islam, the *Summa totius heresis Saracenorum* (The summary of the entire heresy of the Saracens) and the *Liber contra sectam sive heresim Saracenorum* (The refutation of the sect or heresy of the Saracens). The titles of the two works indicate clearly that, like Al-Kindi, Peter regarded Islam as a Christian heresy, specifically a Nestorian heresy.

⁸³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 254.

ments in the Koran, written against Christians, were introduced only later by Mohammed under the influence of his Jewish advisors.⁸⁴ Therefore, Nicholas of Cusa points out that Mohammed composed the Koran by deriving it from Christian and Jewish material and that he did so for his own glory, power, and wealth.⁸⁵

Throughout the *Cribratio*, Nicholas interprets the Koran in a Christian way and tries to find in it traces of Christian beliefs. As mentioned before, for him, all the points that accorded with Christian beliefs were taken from the Gospels, whereas all that was false was due to either Mohammed's ignorance or evil intentions.⁸⁶ Using this argument as his basis, Nicholas of Cusa claims that the Koran is not the Word of God but a man-made text. It was for this reason that Mohammed forbade discussing his law. Instead, he used force and violence in order to spread Islam.

In fact, Nicholas of Cusa's approach was not new, as by then the theme had become a *topos* in medieval polemical literature. Like al-Kindi and later polemicists, Nicholas maintains that because Mohammed could not defend his teachings through argument and discussion, he resorted to arms and deceived his people, claiming that in the Koran, God says "we have destroyed cities before the eyes of those who have not believed. And neither would believe miracles, except by sword. . ." ⁸⁷ Nicholas of Cusa suggests that Mohammed, taking this as justification, argued that God commanded him to use force to spread his religion. Thus Nicholas accuses Mohammed of being dishonest and promoting violence.

Moreover, he condemns Mohammed for advocating sensuality and worldliness, giving as an example the Islamic concept of heaven in the Koran. He suggests that there is as much difference between the Islamic heaven and the Christian heaven as there is between sensory things and intellectual things.⁸⁸ While heaven promises physical pleasures for Muslims, it means spiritual satisfaction for Christians. To support his point, Nicholas of Cusa quotes many different parts of the Koran. He concludes that the Koran repeatedly mentions virgins and fornication in Paradise, adding:

⁸⁴ Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribratio Alkorani*, 969–70.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1068.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 968.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1061.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1043.

I was ashamed to read these vile things. And I said to myself: If Mohammed ascribes to God this book full of vileness, or if he himself wrote it and attributes its authority to God, then I am amazed that those wise and virtuous Arabs, Moors, Egyptians, Persians and Turks who are said to be of this law esteem Mohammed as a prophet. . . . For no one speaks so vilely of such vile things unless he is full of all such vileness.⁸⁹

According to Nicholas of Cusa, Mohammed put such statements in the Koran in order to validate his own immoral and lustful behavior. By saying that God had permitted to him whatever pleasures he craved, Mohammed tried to excuse his own adultery. The idea that Islam promoted carnal pleasures was a commonplace in medieval anti-Islamic texts. Thus it can be said that in his *Cribratio Alkorani*, Nicholas of Cusa mainly echoed earlier medieval anti-Islamic arguments. In turn, a close look at the general themes in Pius's letter indicates that Pius derived most of his themes from Cusa's *Cribratio*, which was a mixture of popular medieval polemical texts against Islam.

Juan de Torquemada

In addition to Nicholas of Cusa's *Cribratio Alkorani*, Pope Pius was also profoundly influenced by Juan de Torquemada's *Contra errores perfidi Machometi* (1459). In 1431 Torquemada was appointed papal theologian and, from then on, he attended all the important assemblies and delivered orations on a wide variety of subjects ordered by the successive popes.⁹⁰

Torquemada was one of the supporters of the Council of Mantua. It has been suggested that in 1458, Pope Pius ordered him to write a work about the errors of Mohammed and his sect.⁹¹ The pope had a practical purpose in mind: princes from all over Europe were supposed to attend the Council meetings, and in order to animate them, Torquemada wrote his treatise abounding with biblical references, promises of glory, and praise for the princes. Torquemada himself stated that he had written his treatise

⁸⁹ Ibid., 1046.

⁹⁰ Ana Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 43.

⁹¹ Ibid., 45.

in a hurry, "not so much to tell Mohammed's history as to demonstrate that his faith contained the mistakes of all heretics."⁹² Most of Torquemada's knowledge about Islam and the Prophet was based on secondhand information rather than the Koran or the collections of *Hadith*. His work was the summing up of Peter the Venerable's views. Pope Pius was also influenced by Torquemada's treatise while composing his own letter.

Themes of Pope Pius II

The first theme Pius deals with is the idea of the Holy Trinity. He argues against Muslims' rejection of the Holy Trinity. He explains that by claiming that Christ was the Son of God, Christians do not mean that God had a son in a marriage through a union with a woman. "We Christians are not so witless as to admit such filth. It is Saracens who can believe such a thing since they attribute a body, head, hands, and other limbs to God."⁹³ Pius maintains that God is incorporeal, immortal, eternal, and an incomprehensible spirit. "As God generates the Word, we call Father, and utterance of the Word itself we call the generation of the Son."⁹⁴ Pius gives a great deal of space to proving the truth of the Trinity through citations from the Bible and analogies that explain it. He asserts that as the idea of the Holy Trinity is established in Holy Scripture and in divine testimonies, it should be obeyed, but that Arius and Mohammed insisted on denying this idea:

Since Arius and Mohammed did not understand this deep, profound mystery, they elected to deny the truth rather than to confess ignorance. They elected to advance their nonsense everywhere instead of humbly learning the truth from others. This is stupid and destructive stubbornness.⁹⁵

Pius stresses that the rejection of the idea of Holy Trinity was not original to Mohammed but that Arius, Nestorius, and Macedonius had been guilty of

⁹² Juan de Torquemada, *Contra Errores Perfidi Machometi*, 3–8, cited in Ana Echevarria's *The Fortress of Faith*, 45.

⁹³ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 44.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

the same error: "Their virus lurked hidden for a long time among the Egyptians and Arabs; Mohammed discovered it with the help of his teacher, Sergius, and diffused it widely."⁹⁶

The defense of the notion of the Holy Trinity also pervades the works of Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Torquemada. They regarded this issue as Mohammed's main error and therefore devoted entire chapters to the discussion of Christian dogma, the relationship between the three entities that make up the Holy Trinity, and the problem of Christ's incarnation. Pius followed the same pattern. He points out that Islam also rejects the crucifixion and incarnation of Christ: "Your law denies the execution of Christ and teaches that someone else was killed in his place. Furthermore, your law recognizes neither that God became flesh nor that He was crucified or died."⁹⁷

He asserts that God suffered for the salvation of man. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, mankind fell into sin, and it is only suitable for God to rescue mankind from sin, as he is "the omnipotent, merciful and just."⁹⁸ About the death of Christ, he writes that Muslims believe Christ was not killed on the cross but was lifted up to heaven, and adds: "what wretched audacity and foolishness never heard anywhere before!"⁹⁹ He explains the falsity of the statement by saying that the Gospels affirm that Christ died on the cross, was buried but rose again, ascended to heaven, and will return at the end of time. But, he adds, "as your religion does not know about Christ what it should know, it does not accept this."¹⁰⁰

From this point onwards, Pius's treatise moves from defense to open attack. He discusses the idea of eternal life and compares the Islamic perception of heaven with the Christian one. He proposes that since Islam is not a divine religion but an invention of Mohammed, it promotes carnal pleasures in both this world and the next. Pius claims that even pagan philosophers did not hold such a view, except for Aristippus and Epicurus. For them "the highest good is pleasure," and "your religion follows them who were the dregs and foul filth of all philosophers."¹⁰¹ He explains that those philosophers did not believe in life after death; however, Muslims expect

⁹⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 57.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 62.

carnal happiness in the next world as well.¹⁰² They are deeply struck by the physical nature of the Islamic paradise—a garden of delights—in contrast to the Christians’ striving for peace of mind and delights of the spirit. Pius says,

Your religion promises rivers of milk, honey and wine in the next world, as well as delicate foods, plentiful women and concubines, relations with virgins, angels to assist in these foul pursuits; in short, all that the flesh desires. This is the paradise of an ox or an ass, not of a man!¹⁰³

Pius addresses the issue in a scathing tone. He draws a clear distinction between Christianity and Islam in terms of the conceptions of heaven by identifying Christianity as a spiritual religion that offers eternal life and Islam as a religion of this world that promotes sensual and vile pleasures.¹⁰⁴ Through this comparison, applied by the majority of medieval polemicists, Pius hoped to elicit in his audience a sense of religious superiority that would help them remain faithful to Christianity.

Another issue Pius deals with sternly is the refutation of the prophecy of Mohammed. He repeats medieval arguments about Mohammed that label him an impostor who lacked divine guidance but established a religion for worldly gain and fame and who, by allowing and promoting pleasures, attracted many to his false religion.

Like al-Kindi and Peter the Venerable, Pius considers Islam a sect born out of a mixture of Christianity and Judaism. Mohammed took the advice of certain wayward Jews and Christians—including Sergius—and produced a third religion that integrated elements from the Old and New Testaments and some other sources.¹⁰⁵ Pius asserts that Mohammed received no divine signs. “What are the signs, what are the miracles which prove the Law of Mohammed?” The roots of this polemic go back to al-Kindi’s text.¹⁰⁶ Refuting the prophecy of Mohammed, Pius associates him with the devil.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 65.

¹⁰⁵ *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, 453–55; Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 129.

¹⁰⁶ *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, 452.

Mohammed rejected the divinity of Christ because he himself lacked it and tried to lure mankind away from Christianity and toward idolatry:

Do you not see that the argument of your prophet and of the demons is the same? That the devil envies Christ and detracts from his glory and majesty and that his counsel and persuasion fashioned your religion contrary to the Gospel and Mosaic Law?¹⁰⁷

Throughout the letter, Pius describes the Ottomans as infidels and enemies and Islam as a heresy, a sect, a false religion, a superstition, an error, and an invention of the devil. Given this context, it is unlikely that Pius sincerely intended to convert Mehmed. It is more likely that he presented such images in order to justify a religious war against the Ottomans.

Another common theme concerning Mohammed was his supposed desire of carnal pleasures and his promotion of lust. Pius claims that Mohammed permitted his followers to marry as many women as they wished and to discard them when they grew tired of them. Pius adds that Mohammed encouraged his followers to commit adultery by telling them, "marry wives and have as many concubines as you please, for I have the strength of forty men in my loins and I consort with many wives and maidens."¹⁰⁸

Pius seems to have derived this quote from the *Apology* of al-Kindi, in which Mohammed is said to have the sexual powers of forty men and where there is a catalog of Mohammed's fifteen wives.¹⁰⁹ For Christian polemicists this statement was more than enough to portray Mohammed as a lustful man:

Your lawgiver has placed adultery, fornication, serving the belly, living in filthy pleasures among good things. Mohammed promotes turpitude and only he advances shameful practices, even mixing the good with the bad, the way heretics do, in order to deceive more easily.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 80.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁰⁹ *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, 432.

¹¹⁰ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 90.

As Mohammed allowed his followers to take part in every kind of passion and pleasure, his laws attracted many people. The lustful image of Mohammed was also reflected onto his believers, resulting in the perception of all Muslims as licentious and immoral people.

Having refuted Mohammed's prophecy, Pius questions the authority of the Koran as a sacred book. Al-Kindi was the first to use this argument against Muslims, charging them with the falsification of the Scriptures. In turn, Muslim polemicists contended that Jews and Christians deliberately falsified their own scriptures (*tahrif*),¹¹¹ omitting prophecies relating to Mohammed from the Torah and Gospels. Pius assails this contention decisively. He argues that neither the Torah nor the rest of the Bible are corrupted. As for the Torah, his argument is that, as it was the first law, there was no reason to change it. Although it was translated into many languages, it was not corrupted, as it still agrees with the Greek and Latin translations. The Old Testament has four versions: that of the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans, the Christians, and the Muslims. Pius claims that of these versions, only the Koran differs from all the others, proving that it is the false one. Pius concludes that the Koran is "a foul invention" of Mohammed.¹¹² He then goes on to defend the validity of the New Testament. Although it was written by more than one person, it contains one doctrine, and all Christians recognize the same version. Therefore, whereas Christians preserve their religious law and remain within the tradition of the Church fathers, Muslims depart from it and pervert it.

In fact, concerning the transmission of sacred texts, Pius used the same argument as Torquemada. In his treatise Torquemada also broaches this issue, proposing that the Bible could not be forged and corrupted by Christians and Jews at the same time, due to their hatred for each other and because of the different views they had held about their sacred Scriptures.¹¹³ Thus both Torquemada and Pius employed the arguments gleaned from the *Apology* of al-Kindi.

Another common theme coming from medieval sources is calling Islam a religion of the sword. Pius, like his predecessors, suggests that

¹¹¹ *Tahrif* means "change" or "alteration" and is used to describe what Jews and Christians are supposed to have done to their Scriptures. For more detail, see the entry "Tahrif" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb (Leiden, 1986).

¹¹² *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 78.

¹¹³ Juan de Torquemada, *Contra Errores Perfidi Machometi*, 115–21, cited in Ana Echevarria's *The Fortress of Faith*, 149.

Islam expanded not through persuasion but through force. The political and military success of the Prophet against the pagan Arabs during the spread of Islam was criticized by many Christian polemicists because, as they claimed, prophets did not spread the Word by the sword.¹¹⁴ According to Pius, since Mohammed was afraid that in discussion "the vanity of his law would be exposed, he prohibited debates and ordered to defend the religion by sword."¹¹⁵

In his letter to Mehmed, Pius claims that the Ottomans' many victories over Christians were achieved not because of their strength but because Christians were being punished by God for their sins: "Your victories have nothing miraculous about them; you never won them without a vast superiority in numbers."¹¹⁶ Pius also asserts that conquest by the sword and the forcible expansion of an empire does not mean that the conquered accept the faith of the conqueror. He uses the Jews as an example: although they were conquered by the Assyrians and the Romans and were oppressed and led off into slavery, they remained true to their religion.¹¹⁷ Implicitly, Pius urges Christians not to lose faith due to defeats and oppression. He says:

We, Christians, do not abandon our religion or blame it when we are conquered in war or are afflicted with other disasters. We think that a good God punishes us like children for our sins when we do not remain true to the traditions of the Holy Fathers.¹¹⁸

However, Pius adds that Christians should not despair, because God is merciful and does not abandon those who call upon him. He also asserts that the triumphs of an enemy do not mean that his religion is superior. He challenges Mehmed: "Not even you would agree with this, nor your prophet, who entrusts the defense of his religion to arms and flies from every kind of thinking."¹¹⁹ These remarks can be taken more as exhortations to a Christian audience than as attempts to persuade the Ottoman sultan.

¹¹⁴ Al-Kindi and Peter the Venerable dealt with this issue in detail: *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, 481; Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 162.

¹¹⁵ *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 84.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The final point of Pius's polemic is a defense of the rationality of Christianity against irrational Islam. According to Pius, Christianity promotes the study of philosophy, the liberal arts, and theology, while Islam represents ignorance and irrationality.

Islam was commonly perceived as irrational by medieval Christian polemicists. They based their argument on the assumption that, as Mohammed was unsure of the truth of his law, he prohibited his followers from disputing it, and he took up arms instead of using reason. Pius also emphasizes this point, but he adds a new dimension by presenting Islam as a barrier to intellectual growth. He contends:

There was once a great and flourishing school of philosophers in Alexandria; many of its learned men whose names have come down to us were known throughout Syria and Asia. But ever since the Law of Mohammed won the day, few have attained renown for revealing the secrets of nature. This is because neither your prophet nor your law, which is founded on pleasure and maintained by the sword, imparts wisdom to those lacking it.¹²⁰

Pius develops a discourse about Muslims to portray them as hostile to learning and the arts. Here it should be mentioned that according to Bisaha, the emphasis on intellectual questions in the fifteenth century appears to be more a product of humanist thought than a medieval precedent.¹²¹ Therefore, in a departure from his medieval predecessors, Pius expands on the idea of the irrationality of Islam and its opposition to intellectual development:

The study of liberal arts flourishes among us. Philosophy is read in public. Theology is taught in universities. No branch of learning is ignored. Famous literary schools are found in many of Italy's cities. . . . Christians have a deep desire to instruct the uninstructed and to understand the truth in our religion.¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibid., 91.

¹²¹ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 169.

¹²² *Epistola ad Mahomatem II*, 91.

By drawing an image of Islam that rests on ignorance, Pius constructs Christianity as the sole promoter of learning and creates a vision of European virtue and enlightenment, in contrast to the wickedness and ignorance of Muslims.

Conclusion

An examination of the letter itself from various aspects has shown that Pope Pius, in his discussion of Islam, emphasized similar points as medieval Christian polemicists had. He too regarded Islam as a heresy founded on pleasure and force; he questioned the prophecy of Mohammed, the originality of the Koran as the Word of God, and the rationality of the Muslim faith. While doing so, he followed al-Kindi, Peter the Venerable, Riccolodo de Montecroce, and other medieval polemicists. Since the Middle Ages, Christian polemicists tried to refute Islam in all possible ways by looking for the most damaging arguments and by formulating the harshest, most black-and-white claims. In this way they hoped to convince the Christians that Islam as a heresy of Mohammed aimed to destroy Christianity, the only true faith, even if the motivations behind this attitude changed according to the political and social needs of the time. In general, however, these represented, as Tolan pointed out, "the desire to justify a war against a Muslim state, an attempt to dissuade Christians from converting to Islam, or a need to justify the rule of Christian princes over Muslim subjects."¹²³

During the fifteenth century, due to a growing Ottoman threat, most works devoted to Islam and the Ottomans were written in the tradition of medieval anti-Islamic polemics. Although it has been suggested that the declared aim of polemics was to convince the Other of the error of his ways and to convert him to the true path,¹²⁴ the intended audience of these polemical works was Christians, and their main aim was not the conversion of the Ottomans. Similarly, close analysis of Pope Pius's letter has demonstrated that although ostensibly written as a conversion letter, Pius's epistle displayed the characteristics of medieval anti-Islamic polemical texts, echoing the themes of earlier refutations of Islam.

¹²³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 281.

¹²⁴ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 145.

As already stated, Pius did not make this letter public during his lifetime; therefore it is difficult to reach a definite conclusion regarding its purpose. It is evident, however, that the arguments concerning Islam were unlikely to carry any weight with Mehmed. Instead, Pius meant to address Christians, especially the ones who were exposed to the Ottoman expansion, and inspire in them disgust and contempt for Islam. He meant to reassure the Christian audience of the superiority of their religious beliefs and instruct them against the dangers of yielding to Islamic heresy. Moreover, the detailed refutation of Islam in Pius's letter might have been intended to show Christians that a crusade or a military response was the only way to confront the Ottomans. Using religious polemics, Pius demonized the enemy in order to justify and glorify a new crusade against the Ottomans.

Pope Pius II's letter is a fascinating combination of medieval themes on Islam, of humanist rhetoric, and of the familiar discourse of the Ottoman Other. It was written to assert the primacy of religion and papal leadership in the struggle against the Turks, to reaffirm Christian pride in having a superior religion, and to hold out the prospect of what could be achieved if Christians united against the Turk. The text mirrors the main concerns and attitudes of fifteenth-century Western humanists in the face of the Ottoman peril.

Consequently, there are several plausible interpretations of the purpose of Pius's letter, but these do not include its declared intention of converting the Ottoman sultan to Christianity. One can even argue that through the image of Mehmed II as a ruler and the image of Islam, Pius was engaged in constructing a satisfying self-image of Latin Christians and Christianity, a belief in European superiority over the Ottomans. In this sense, Pius's letter reveals not only the Renaissance perceptions of the Ottoman Other, but also the process of creating a self-image through the image of the Other.

Topography of a Society:

*Muslims, Dwellers, and Customs of Algiers in Antonio de Sosa's
Topographia, e Historia General de Argel*

JOHANNA TÓTH

After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the number of treatises on the “Turks” multiplied.¹ The Ottoman Empire attracted the attention not only of informed humanists (some of whom referred to the “Turks” as the “new barbarians”²) but of wider European polities. They gathered a variety of information on the “enemy” threatening their borders, and thus data on the “religious Other” reached Christendom through many channels: through people from different regions, backgrounds, and education, via certain modes of encountering the “Turk.” Therefore, information on the “Turks” varied considerably. While in most cases “Europeans” conceived of the “Turks” (or “Moors” or “Saracens”) as a homogenous group, some accounts presented a more nuanced view of Muslims. This study follows the results of the recent scholarly debate that has emphasized this varied image of them in Europe.³

¹ Carl Göllner identified 500 writers, and listed 2,463 editions, pamphlets, news sheets, memoirs, accounts, and other writings that dealt with the Ottomans. Jeremy Lawrence, “Europe and the Turks in Spanish Literature of the Renaissance and Early Modern Period,” in *Culture and Society in Habsburg Spain: Studies Presented to R.W. Truman by His Pupils and Colleagues on the Occasion of His Retirement*, ed. Nigel Griffin, et al. (London: Tamesis, 2001), 17. There were more writings about the “Turks” than about the New World: *ibid.*, 18.

² Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 43.

³ These include David R. Blanks, “Western Views of Islam,” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin’s Press: 1999), 11–53; Daniel J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism, Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe,” in Blanks and Frassetto, *Western Views of Islam*, 207–31; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*; Lucette Valensi, “The Making of a Political Paradigm: The Ottoman State and Oriental

Early modern practitioners of science, education, and politics contributed significantly to the emergence of new formulations of perceptions, and novel methods in systemizing their material. Consequently, a growing number of observers, and later authors, were able to distinguish among various groups of Muslims and discuss different “ethnic” and cultural groups inhabiting Muslim societies. In their focus, methods, and depth, these writings can be considered early ethnographic accounts. The source examined in this essay is such an anthropological document: Antonio de Sosa’s *Topographia, e historia general de Argel*, published in 1612.

This work consists of five volumes, of which I examine only the first, the *Topography of Algiers*. This volume provides a colorful and detailed account of the city of Algiers and its geography, architecture, inhabitants, military, and government organizations. It is a significant entry in the series of sixteenth-century accounts written about the Muslims from an ethnographic point of view: the author is concerned with the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings, as well as their everyday life, clothes, customs, characteristics, and religious rites.⁴ He also gives an account of the different “ethnic” and religious groups in everyday contact with each other, their relationships, and the boundaries between them. De Sosa’s *Topography* is exceptional among early modern descriptions of Muslims because of its precise depiction of the “ethnic” groups within a Muslim society, and because of the way he selected and categorized different ethnic identities.⁵

In the following, De Sosa’s method of selection, the function of certain ethnic and cultural categories (such as the “Turk,” “Moor,” or “Jew”), and their possible meanings will be examined. This article attempts to place

Despotism,” in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 173–203; Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, c2006).

⁴ This work is important for several reasons: it was written about a city that had been known as the “capital of the corsairs,” the capital of one of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, a Mediterranean city with a complex multicultural and multilingual society, and an important trading center.

⁵ It has to be noted, however, that the categories de Sosa uses are of a mixed nature; one cannot claim that they are clearly “ethnic.” Nor are the boundaries of “identity” clear, as they were not clear in the era itself. Furthermore, these “ethnic,” or rather, “ethno-religious” or “cultural” categories are not the same as today; meanwhile, such early modern categories as “professional identity” or “regional” category of identity are also present in the text. Hence, I do not want to project onto the text the modern understanding of Moors, Turks, etc., nor the category of “ethnicity” or “religious identity” of today.

and contextualize the work within travel literature and among captivity accounts, as well as among general and specifically “Iberian” perceptions of Muslims. It is also aimed at positioning his account within contemporary ethnographic knowledge.

De Sosa’s Life in Brief⁶

“... cuánto pasa en Argel sé, y aun lo escribo todo, día por día...”⁷

The Portuguese Antonio de Sosa was a doctor of canon and civil law (*Doctor in utroque iure*) and also a doctor of theology.⁸ First, he received the position of vicar general of the bishopric at Siracusa (Syracuse) and Catania in Sicily.⁹ On October 26, 1576, Philip II (king of Spain, 1556–1598; king of Portugal, 1580–1598) appointed him to serve as dean and vicar general of the cathedral of Agrigento in Sicily.¹⁰ However, he could not take up his position, because in April 1577, on his way to Sicily, he and his family were captured by Algerian corsairs (led by the famous Arnaut Mamí).¹¹ De Sosa spent four and a half years in Algiers (1577–1581) in a small prison in the house of Muhammad, a Jewish renegade.¹²

⁶ Information about de Sosa is scarce. María Antonia Garcés conducted important research on him. See her introduction to *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam: Antonio de Sosa’s Topography of Algiers (1612)* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). For other background work on de Sosa, see also Garcés’s book *Cervantes in Algiers* and George Camamis’s *Estudios sobre el cautiverio en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977).

⁷ “I know everything that occurs in Algiers, and I even take it down completely, day by day.” Cited and translated in Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive’s Tale* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), 77.

⁸ He was Portuguese by birth but became a Spanish subject, supposedly before 1576: Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 60. Garcés (*ibid.*, 68) assumes that de Sosa studied either in Coimbra or at the University of Salamanca, as it was favored by Portuguese students.

⁹ It is known for certain that Bishop Juan Orozco de Arce, who appointed de Sosa as vicar, was elevated to the bishopric in December 1562. *Ibid.*, 58–59.

¹⁰ It was regarded as an outstanding post with a substantial income.

¹¹ They were traveling on one of the ships (*San Pablo*) of the Order of Malta. Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 41–42; Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 69. One of de Sosa’s works, *Epítome de los reyes*, mentions the capture of the ship, and so does Cervantes in his drama *El trato de Argel* [Life in Algiers]. It is also interesting to note that Arnaut Mamí was also the one who captured Cervantes: Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 69.

¹² Ka’id Muhammad was in charge of the mint in Algiers; he converted first from Judaism to Islam, then to Christianity, then back to Islam. De Sosa mentions him several

In captivity, de Sosa spent most of his time reading and writing. He surrounded himself with books in his prison cell.¹³ In spite of his incarceration, he was in regular contact with the people of his master's household, and Christians could visit him, as de Sosa was a man of the church. The better-known Miguel de Cervantes became his best friend there, and among other subjects, they discussed poetry, literature, and what they had written in captivity.¹⁴

In July 1581, de Sosa managed to escape. He went first to Madrid, where a scandal broke out: he was accused of being an Augustinian friar who had fled from his order and was pretending to be a lay priest. Furthermore, it turned out that the woman with him on board was not his sister but his lover, and presumably his "nephew" was actually his son. In the end, the pope pardoned him and, moreover, retained de Sosa in his office, which made Philip II angry, further poisoning the relationship between the pope and the king.¹⁵

times in his account—he lists him among the *ka'ids* of Algiers, and he writes about him in *Diálogo de la captividad*. Certainly, he was a model for many negative depictions of Jews and renegades in de Sosa's text. See Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 42–50; Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 77.

¹³ For more about his sources and the books he supposedly used, see Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 73. "Ramírez: So, every time I come, must I find you occupied with books? Sosa: In a solitude like this, and in a prison so isolated from all talk and conversation in which my master, this barbarian, keeps me, what better occupation is there than reading holy and good books?" [Ramírez: De manera que ¿siempre que acá vengo le he de hallar ocupado en los libros? Sosa: En una soledad como ésta y en un encerramiento tan apartado de toda plática y conversación en que este bárbaro de mi patrón me tiene, ¿qué mejor ocupación que leer los libros santos y buenos?] Antonio de Sosa, *Diálogo de los Mártires de Argel*, eds. Emilio Sola and José María Parreño (Madrid: Hiperión, c1990), 54. Here, too, I would like to thank Hervin Fernández y Acevez for his great help with the Spanish translations.

¹⁴ Cervantes was in captivity in Algiers around the same time as de Sosa, i.e., between 1575 and 1580. In one of his books, *Diálogo de los Mártires*, de Sosa gives an account of Cervantes's second escape attempt. He had shared his plans with de Sosa and invited him to join him—a sign of great trust on Cervantes's part. In addition, de Sosa gave testimony on Cervantes's behalf after he was redeemed while de Sosa was still in captivity (in 1580), which attests to the close relationship between the two writers. The testimony can be found in *Información de Miguel de Cervantes de lo que ha servido á S.M. y de los que ha hecho estando captive en Argel . . .* transcription by Pedro Torres Lanzas (Madrid: José Esteban D.L., 1981), 157.

¹⁵ There had already been a confrontation over the question of papal jurisdiction in Spanish lands. Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 70.

De Sosa's *Topographia*¹⁶

As the full title of his book explains, following the contemporary conventions, it is the "Topography and General History of Algiers—Divided among Five Books, which Will Exhibit Strange Cases, Horrific Deaths, and Extraordinary Tortures that Christianity Needs to Understand: With Copious Doctrine and Curious Elegance."¹⁷ This heading not only identifies the topics of the account but also communicates the book's main concerns and goals. The use of terms such as "topography" and "history" refer to a holistic description of the city. The title was also intended to report to the world about the captives' "great miseries, and martyrdoms"¹⁸ as the author worded in the title. According to contemporary fashion—mostly to attract an audience—sensationalist words such as "extraordinary" or "horrific" were included. As for its structure, the history, topography, natural beauty, and government of Algiers occupy only thirteen chapters out of forty-one,

¹⁶ De Sosa's work *Topography* contains three books: the first is the *Topography of Algiers*; the second is *Epítome de los reyes de Argel* [The history of the kings of Algiers], a chronicle of the rulers of Algiers. The third, called *Topographia* [Topography], contains two dialogues on captivity, *De la captividad* [On captivity] and *De los mártires de Argel* [Of the Algerian martyrs], and a theological discourse entitled *De los morabutos* [Of the Marabouts]. The work was published in 1612, after de Sosa's death, in Valladolid under the name of Diego de Haedo, archbishop of Palermo, by his nephew with the same name. Haedo and de Sosa knew each other and worked together in Sicily after de Sosa's escape: Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 72–76. George Camamis and later María Antonia Garcés (in *Cervantes in Algiers* and later in *An Early Modern Dialogue*) confirmed that the author of the work was Antonio de Sosa. In their introduction to their edition of *Diálogo de los Mártires de Argel*, José María Parreño and Emilio Sola attest to this. About the assumptions on this issue, see also Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 72–78; Camamis, *Estudios sobre el cautiverio*; Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 33; Ana María Rodríguez Rodríguez, "La representación de las relaciones hispano-musulmanas en tres obras del siglo XVII: *Topographia e historia general de Argel*, *Cautiverio y trabajos de Diego Galán* e *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*," (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007), 14.

¹⁷ *Topographia e historia general de Argel, repartida en cinco tratados, do se veran casos estraños, muertes espantosas, y tormentos exquisitos, que conviene se entiendan en la Christianidad: con mucha doctrina, y elegancia curiosa*. One has to take into account that the work could have undergone some editing by Diego de Haedo or his nephew who published the work; the two Haedos may have chosen or changed the title as well.

¹⁸ Cited in Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 2.

whereas twenty-seven chapters deal with the people of the city and its surroundings.

Exactly when de Sosa wrote his treatise is unknown. Apparently he started it in Algiers and completed and edited it after his escape. Most likely, he made notes during his captivity, as the account seems to contain a great deal of firsthand information. Furthermore, there are hints that parts were written in Algiers, some after his escape.¹⁹ De Sosa's purpose(s) of writing cannot be stated with certainty. His stories about the miseries of captives in Algiers could serve as an impetus for the redemption of those still alive, and as another tool for proving that Christianity was the one and only true religion.²⁰ He supposedly believed that one day Algiers would be Christian, and that was also what necessitated a precise registry of the heroes who consecrated the land.²¹ Moreover, the detailed description of the city must have served strategic purposes.²² The meticulous narration continues with an account of the inhabitants, which could also serve

¹⁹ In one place he writes: "There are also many Turks and Moors who have been captives in Spain, Italy, and France . . . another great number of Jews who speak Spanish, Italian, and French very beautifully because they have been *here*. . ." *Topographia*, 185 (italics mine). When he is discussing the differences between the Christian and the Muslim calendar, he uses the Julian calendar (the Gregorian was introduced in Catholic countries in 1582). Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 339. Furthermore, he writes: "from the first day that I entered Algiers, I have written, among other things, the number [of Moriscos] that arrive, and even in what month, in what week, in what day and hour, and how they came" (Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 34).

²⁰ For "proof," see Camamis, *Estudios sobre el cautiverio en el siglo de oro*, 118.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

²² Let me cite two examples where the strategic function of the chapters is obvious: "On the island closest to the port, there are, in addition, two small towers. . . . But these two towers are of small importance, having absolutely no force of artillery" (*Topographia*, 111). "This whole fortification is dominated by and is vulnerable to a mountain on this right hand . . . where an enemy with artillery could disturb all help coming from the city" (*ibid.*, 116). This function of the captivity narratives is well-known. See, for example, Daniel Vitkus and Nabil I. Matar, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Daniel Bernardo Hershenzon, "Early Modern Spain and the Creation of the Mediterranean: Captivity, Commerce, and Knowledge" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2011); Lajos Tardy, ed., *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az Oszmán Birodalomról* [Captives, envoys, and merchants about the Ottoman Empire] (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1977); the account of Diego Galán: *Edición crítica de cautiverio y trabajos de Diego Galán*, ed. Matías Barchino (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2001). De Sosa also mentions his role as a kind of "spy" in a letter written to Philip II after his release from captivity: Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 66.

strategic goals, as accurate information on the “religious Other” would be helpful for the Inquisition.²³ Other motivations might have included curiosity and de Sosa’s ambition to create a great work that testified to his broad vision and knowledge. However, as Linda Colley demonstrated, writing in his prison cell—away from his familiar environment, in the humiliating status of a captive—may have helped him survive and preserve his identity.²⁴

“Un Cuerpo Muerto?”²⁵—Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and North Africa

In order to understand the conditions of de Sosa’s captivity,²⁶ the circumstances that affected his ability to observe and write, one has to look at the notion of slavery in the Ottoman Empire, and more specifically, in Algiers. That helps shed light on a captive’s potential opportunities, the space in which he could move, and his ways of gathering knowledge and interpreting information.

²³ The Inquisition was in its heyday in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was established by the Catholic monarchs (Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile) in 1481 to clear the Iberian peninsula of all heretics and to make it a homogeneous Catholic state. Later I will discuss how de Sosa’s text and the writings of others served the institution of the Inquisition.

²⁴ Linda Colley, “Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire,” *Past and Present* 168 (2000): 170–93.

²⁵ De Sosa writes in *Diálogo de la Captividad*: “For the honor (moral dignity), title, and (juridical) existence that the law assigns to the slave consists in calling him and declaring him nothing more than a dead body, or an entity without being. . .” Translated and cited in Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*, 149.

²⁶ Here the problem of terminology has to be discussed, primarily the interchangeability of the expressions “captive” and “slave.” While Pál Fodor argues for a distinction between the two, Robert C. Davis and Daniel Bernardo Hershenzon both argue against it, saying that the terms “slave” and “captive” are used interchangeably in the sources. These categories sometimes overlapped, and changed over time. See more: Pál Fodor, introduction to *Ransom Slavery*, xiv; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xxv; Hershenzon, “Early Modern Spain,” 25–26. For more on the terms: Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800–1909* (Basingstoke and London: MacMillan, 1996), xx; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), “Abd.” I use both terms and do not make a distinction between them, as de Sosa also uses both of the expressions: “they ordinarily arrive here as captives and slaves.” *Topographia*, 119.

At the end of the sixteenth century, an increase in pirate activity resulted in a growing number of slaves in Algiers.²⁷ The notion of slavery in the Islamic world was different from that in ancient times, or in the New World.²⁸ Although there were stages that each and every slave went through, slavery was far from the same for everyone. The decisive factors in defining the circumstances and opportunities of each enslaved person were their background, physical appearance, age, sex, and occupation (concubine, domestic servant, galley slave, agricultural worker, miner, etc.), their master, and their relationship.²⁹ In Algiers three types of captives can be named for their masters: the “king’s” (governor’s) slaves, the slaves of private individuals (only a minority could afford to keep slaves), and public prisoners. Their status and positions were dynamic, shaped by several elements. Over time they changed masters and occupations, they made friends, had helpers, established widespread social networks, and attempted to integrate themselves into the society.³⁰

Antonio de Sosa was a captive for ransom, a highly valued one, as he was a high-ranking member of the Hispano-Italian Church.³¹ He was bought by a Jewish renegade, Muhammad, a rich municipal official in charge of the mint of Algiers, who “does nothing else but occupy his days

²⁷ Robert C. Davis (*Christian Slaves*, 13) estimates the numbers of slaves at 20,000 to 40,000 persons in Algiers between 1586 and 1680. De Sosa estimates the number of Christian slaves at more than 25,000 (*Topographia*, 119.) See more: Fodor, *Ransom Slavery*, xx. For more about the issue of the economic value of slaves, see Davis, *Christian Slaves*.

²⁸ Slaves in the Ottoman Empire were under the jurisdiction of *sharia* (religious law); even the Koran and the *hadith* (records of Muhammad’s deeds and speeches) mention it. In these sources, slaves are considered human beings, and according to *sharia*, masters were obligated to treat their slaves well.

²⁹ Fodor, *Ransom Slavery*, xvii; Hershenson, “Early Modern Spain,” 32; Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Francisco Rico (Madrid: Punto de Lectura, 2012), 409–10. I used the translation of John Ormsby of *Don Quixote* on E-Books Directory (<http://e-bookdirectory.com>). The state was the main “employer” of slaves; it used them in great numbers in the administration and in the army (“military-governmental slavery”). Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise*, 1.

³⁰ For a more elaborate argument against the definition of slavery as “social death,” see Chapter 2 of Hershenson, *Early Modern Spain*. One of the main examples—the case of a domestic slave, Diego Galán—is revealing. Upon his purchase, he was promised: “be good and loyal, and I will treat you well” [*Sed vos bueno y fiel que yo os trataré bien*] (*Cautiverio y trabajos de Diego Galán*, 186), and according to him, he became almost a part of his master’s family. Conversion made social mobility much easier.

³¹ According to Garcés (*An Early Modern Dialogue*, 61), the ransom for de Sosa and his family was fifteen hundred ducats, three times more than for Cervantes.

and nights in rummaging through money. . .³² De Sosa was sent out to do public work from time to time in order to make him beg the Spanish king to pay his ransom. Muhammad's house was one of the largest and most prominent in Algiers,³³ and thus de Sosa met many kinds of people of various origins, officials and visitors alike, not to mention the diverse members of his master's household (wives, children, relatives, servants, and slaves) and the Christian slaves who visited him in the prison.³⁴ Thus his captivity was not spent in total isolation. He was active in many ways: he could speak with and gather news from people around him, and he was also in contact with Spain,³⁵ sending letters to the king and even writing a testimony for the report on Cervantes upon his manumission.³⁶

Barbary, Corsairs, Spain, and the Ottoman Empire³⁷

The scene and the context where de Sosa lived and created his account was the Western Mediterranean, which was also one of the regions where two empires clashed: an expanding Christian one (Habsburg Spain) and a Muslim one (the Ottoman Empire). At the end of the fifteenth century, Spain continued its centralizing efforts and territorial expansion (*reconquista*) on the Iberian peninsula (the conquest of Granada in 1492) at the

³² Sosa depicted his master like this in *Diálogo de la captividad*, cited in Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 43.

³³ Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 47.

³⁴ Garcés (*Cervantes in Algiers*, 82) listed some of de Sosa's visitors and the people he encountered.

³⁵ Captives were also of great use to the state they belonged to. They played a prominent role in the state's information-gathering efforts. They sent reports from their captivity or they were asked for reports later; every kind of knowledge was valuable for the state. Hershenzon, "Early Modern Spain," 2, 16.

³⁶ See Emilio Sola, "La Información de Argel de 1580" (2007), <http://archivodefiontera.com> (last accessed February 20, 2013); Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers*.

³⁷ In the sixteenth century, the name "Barbary" meant different things to different people in Europe. Most Europeans used the name "Barbary" to refer to the territory of the Maghreb, the area where the Berbers lived, from Tripoli in the east to the Atlantic coast of Morocco in the west. Leo Africanus and Mármol Carvajal also give various reasons for the name "Berbería." See Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa, and of the Notable Things Therein Contained*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Brown (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 129; Mármol Carvajal, *Primera parte de la descripción general de África, con todos los successos de guerras que a audio entre los infieles...* (Granada, 1573), lib. 1, fol. 5, cap. 6.

expense of the Muslims.³⁸ The expansion and the subsequent increase of intolerance in Spanish religious policy resulted in a great flow of Hispano-Muslim immigrants, resentful towards Spain, into the Maghreb. Spanish troops also advanced to North Africa and set foot there.³⁹ Algiers agreed to pay tribute and relinquished to the Spanish one of the four islands off the coast of the city, where the Spanish built a fortress, El Peñon (1510). Meanwhile, at the beginning of Charles I's reign, the Ottoman Empire "crept" into the region.⁴⁰ Privateers established their bases on the shores of the Maghreb, thus inaugurating an indirect Ottoman presence in the region as a first stage of expansion.⁴¹ Oruç Barbarossa and his brother

³⁸ For more about the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada and the warfare between the Spanish and the Hispano-Muslims, see the chapter "A Military Revolution" in Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 11–26; Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 146.

³⁹ In addition to the conquests of cities in North Africa, the Spanish built a line of *presidios* (garrisons) in the Maghreb, shifting the frontier between the Spanish and Muslims to the Maghreb. John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks, 1500 to 1830* (New York: Norton & Company, c1979), 5; Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 147.

⁴⁰ Charles I, King of Spain 1516–1556; Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria 1519–1556. First, Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512), by sending the privateer Kemal Reis to collect information on the Western Mediterranean, established relations with North African leaders and initiated the first encounters with the Muslims in Granada at the end of the fifteenth century. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 147–48; Wolf, *The Barbary Coast*; John Francis Guilmartin, *Galleons and Galleys* (London: Cassell, 2002), 128.

⁴¹ The first half of the sixteenth century is considered the period of the rise of corsairs, both Muslims and Christians. A corsair was "anybody who went on a *corso* by participating in the *razzia*, regular raids . . . encouraged and financed at times and protected always by a political body. A corsair was a privateer who operated under a universal set of laws, rules, and customs." Some came from the Levant, and others from Spain; some were Muslims by birth, and others converted from Christianity. Emrah Safa Gürkan, "The Centre and the Frontier: Ottoman Cooperation with the North African Corsairs in the Sixteenth Century," *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): 125–26. The corsairs also had great importance for information-gathering for the state. They were in a close relationship with Western and Southern Europe, and they could easily spy on the enemy, especially given that there were many renegades among their ranks. On the importance of "unofficial spies," see Gábor Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. V.H. Aksan and D. Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75–103. For more about Christian pirates, see Molly Green, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Hayreddin set foot in Algiers,⁴² and at the invitation of Hayreddin, Selim I (1512–1520) extended his control to the city and the region and appointed Hayreddin as governor-general (*beylerbey*) of *Cezayir-i Arab* (Algeria of the Arabs).⁴³

Philip II was concerned with the repulsion of the “Turkish threat.” Philip’s 1567 edict, which forbade the Moriscos to exercise many of their Islamic customs and aimed at their full assimilation, brought turbulence to the kingdom. The revolt of Alpujarras (1568–1570) was strongly supported by the Ottoman center and the provinces of North Africa.⁴⁴ However, the importance of the Western Mediterranean as a theater of war gradually decreased. After Philip II went bankrupt in 1575, the Spanish king sought peace with the Ottoman Empire. The foreign policy of the Ottomans was also directed eastward, to the Safavid Empire, which made the Western Mediterranean less important. The peace treaty between Spain and the Ottoman Empire was signed in 1580, and the Ottoman navy was recalled from Algiers in 1581.⁴⁵

The Society of Algiers

From the end of the fifteenth century onwards, a demographic boom took place in Algiers, caused by the immigration of Hispano-Muslims, corsair activity, trade, and the arrival of the Ottoman soldiers.⁴⁶ The political situation in the regency, however, was marked by infighting among hostile fac-

⁴² Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 149; Wolf, *The Barbary Coast*, 8.

⁴³ Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 65. Emrah Safa Gürkan poses the question of the exact date of the incorporation of Algeria into the Ottoman Empire and the appointment of Hayreddin. Gürkan, “The Centre and the Frontier,” 133. Hayreddin governed Algiers for eight years, during which time Algiers became the principal center of Ottoman authority in North Africa. During his rule Algiers became a strong naval base, if not the strongest on the coast of the Maghreb. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 151; Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 68.

⁴⁴ In accordance with the order of Sultan Selim II (1566–1574), the naval captain Uluç Ali Pasha, who was appointed to the governorship of Algiers in 1568, sent men and arms to the rebels. Moreover, the Ottoman naval agents took advantage of the revolt in Spain and captured Tunis in 1569.

⁴⁵ Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 153; Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 98–99.

⁴⁶ For more on the population of the city, see Federico Cresti, “Algiers in the Ottoman Period,” in *The City in the Islamic World*, ed. Salma Jayyusi et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

tions and social groups.⁴⁷ The key actors were the Ottoman-appointed governor-general (*beylerbey*), the community (*taifa*) of the corsairs, the Ottoman troops (*Ocak*), the Ottoman center, the tribes of Algeria, and the local inhabitants of the city. These groups had an interdependent relationship.

Algerian society had a basically tribal character. Tribes leading a pastoral life inhabited western and southern Algeria, and in the east, most of the population made a living from agriculture.⁴⁸ The tribes were often led by religious *marabouts* who drew their lineages from holy men. These leaders had a great influence in some regions and thus became founders of certain principalities.⁴⁹

The society of Algiers was multifaceted, consisting of various groups hailing from different regions with different religious and cultural backgrounds. The soldiers mostly came from Anatolia,⁵⁰ the corsairs from all over the Mediterranean,⁵¹ and there were immigrants from Spain and traders, too. Apart from the Muslim population—Moors, Ottoman Turks, renegades, corsairs, Moriscos—a great number of Jews and Christians lived there: artisans, merchants, free men, and slaves. The intermingling of those groups created a hybrid frontier world, a mixed frontier society that can truly be called a “crossroads of civilizations.”⁵²

New Renaissance Genres for Ethnographic Knowledge about Muslims⁵³

Several key features of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have to be considered in order to understand the development and transformation

⁴⁷ Ottoman control over the provinces was rather loose, as it was hard for Istanbul to exercise direct control over the regions. The governor-general governed in the name of the sultan, but often the *beylerbey* acted on his own without following the orders of the center, or was only a puppet in the hands of the *Ocak*. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast*, 65.

⁴⁸ Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, 161.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 162. In order to gain their goodwill, the Ottoman authorities gave them tax exemptions or created *habus* property from them. See *ibid.*, 163.

⁵⁰ This was according to an agreement between Selim I and Hayreddin. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast*, 58.

⁵¹ The number of renegades was overwhelming. Being a renegade gave a mariner a great advantage, as he knew the Christian European languages and was much more familiar with the culture and customs than a janissary.

⁵² Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam*, 2.

⁵³ “When I came among them, it seemed indeed to me as if I were stepping into a different universe.” William of Rubruck, cited in Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters*

of perceptions about the world beyond Europe. These changing dimensions led to the production of the kind of “ethnographic knowledge” that constituted early modern anthropology. One of these was the emergence of observation and empiricism (i.e., a reliance on “facts”), and the humanists’ desire for continuous self-education that regarded travel and a “wandering life” as one way of learning.⁵⁴ Contemplating the “dignity of man” and the idea of the homogenous nature of human beings⁵⁵ implied observing humans “globally.” This—along with the increasing mobility of men, the discovery of new lands, and the invention of the printing press—made travel popular as a new kind of experience and encouraged a new literary genre, travel literature.⁵⁶ The religious contemplation of medieval pilgrimage gave way to a more secular vision focused on humans. This process began before the fifteenth century; a continuity can be observed from ancient times (starting from Odysseus) through the pilgrimages and medieval Crusades, to the chivalric romances of the late Middle Ages.⁵⁷ Therefore, as the word “transformation” implies, travel writing in the early modern era did not develop in opposition to the writings of medieval practices and ideologies (of the Crusades, pilgrimage, and chivalry); instead, it

with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 3.

⁵⁴ This notion of travel for the “extent of wisdom” can be found even in ancient times (Odysseus, Apollonius of Tyana). Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, introduction to *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 11–13.

⁵⁵ Almut Höfert, “The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat: The Conceptualisation of Islam in the Rise of Occidental Anthropology in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Between Europe and Islam*, ed. Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 42.

⁵⁶ As Elsner and Rubiés put it in the introduction to their book *Voyages and Visions*, these new perceptions and the emergence of empiricism were a response to a “crisis of belief” in the fourteenth century and contributed to the development of travel literature as a literary genre offering an “alternative source of narrative truth.” Thus “what the Renaissance inherited from this period was, above all, the idea that there was a kind of truth about men and nature . . . which rested upon direct observation rather than upon written authority.” Elsner and Rubiés, introduction to *Voyages and Visions*, 29–30. See also Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550–1800* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, c1995), 47.

⁵⁷ For more about the transformation of ideas and perception, see the introduction to *Voyages and Visions*, and see, e.g., the works of William of Tyre (1130–1186) and Gerald of Wales (1145–1223), and the *Description of the World* by Marco Polo (c. 1298), which contains ethnographic data and is mostly (not exclusively) based on observations and experience. Introduction to Elsner and Rubiés, *Voyages and Visions*, 25–37.

grew out of them in a partly changed form.⁵⁸ On the other hand, with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the conquest of Constantinople, curiosity about the Muslims, especially the Ottomans or “Turks,” increased as they came to be seen as a political, religious, and cultural threat.⁵⁹

The encounter itself, along with the above continuities, inspired the production of knowledge that had to be organized, and a methodology had to be developed to make the newly gathered “ethnographic knowledge” comprehensible. Although anthropology became an acknowledged discipline in the nineteenth century, its early methods and characteristics are already present in de Sosa’s account.⁶⁰ John Howland Rowe argues that anthropology began in the Renaissance in the fifteenth century and “in the sixteenth century there was a great expansion of anthropological observation, and we find the first attempts to classify and interpret anthropological data.”⁶¹ As ethnology⁶² deals with the divisions of humankind and its characteristics, the *Topographia* indisputably belongs among the ethnographic treatises. De Sosa is concerned with the dwellings of Algerian people, their names, the languages they speak, and their clothes, physical appearance, everyday life, customs, and religions. He records these by looking at different “ethnic” groups and describing them one by one.

“The art of travel” (*methodus apodemica* or *ars apodemica*) was meant to be the methodological framework for presenting the increased amount of knowledge that defined the categories of observation and the mode

⁵⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁹ As a result of the fear and anxiety, and also of the need for accurate knowledge about them, many treatises appeared on the “Turks,” producing a specific genre, the *Turcica*. Lawrence, “Europe and the Turks in Spanish Literature,” 17.

⁶⁰ The word “anthropology” was first used in 1501, in the title of a book called *Antropologium*, “discourse on man,” by Magnus Hundt the Elder. The words “ethnography” and “ethnology” were not mentioned before the nineteenth century, but its subjects were described as “life and customs” in the title, and the closest equivalent to “ethnology” was the expression “moral history.” John Howland Rowe, “Ethnography and Ethnology in the Sixteenth Century,” *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 30 (1964): 1.

⁶¹ Rowe, “Ethnography and Ethnology,” 1–19.

⁶² Ethnology is a subfield of anthropology and is also called cultural anthropology. Raymond Scupin and Christopher R. DeCorse, *Anthropology: A Global Perspective* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, c2004). Ethnology is “the study of the divisions, especially racial, of human-kind, their origins, distribution, relations and characteristics,” while ethnography is “the systematic recording of human cultures.” Palmira Brummett, “Genre, Witness, and Time in the ‘Book’ of Travels,” in *The “Book” of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage, 1250–1700*, ed. Palmira Brummett and Andrew Colin Gow (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 2.

of arrangement.⁶³ It offered models for describing cities and people,⁶⁴ and de Sosa's *Topographia* mostly follows these patterns. The author begins with the foundation and history of Algiers, starting from ancient times, and explains the old and new names of the city. Thereafter he walks through the city, describing it stone by stone, its walls, gates and buildings. He leads the reader to individual houses and continues his portrayal of inhabitants of Algiers and neighboring settlements, reporting on the different "ethnicities" and the various occupations they hold. In the following chapters de Sosa focuses on everyday life and customs, and he ends his account by describing some buildings again, as well as the natural beauty of the city and its government.⁶⁵ This arrangement reflects his consciousness of the genre and his interest in "establishing facts of human diversity."⁶⁶

Captivity Narratives⁶⁷

Captivity accounts share many characteristics with travel narratives and often follow similar patterns of structuring the gathered knowledge.⁶⁸ Moreover, captivity narratives also share the same topics that the reader

⁶³ Stagl, *A History of Curiosity*; Almut Höfert, "The Order of Things."

⁶⁴ The first handbooks were published by the British, and afterward came the Ramus Questionnaire (Pierre de la Ramé, *Dialecticae Institutiones* in 1543). In 1577 Theodor Zwinger published his *Methodus apodemica in eorum gratiam qui cum fructu in quocunque tandem vitae genere peregrinari cupiunt* in Basel, in which he offers a methodology for travel writing. Around the time of Zwinger and afterward, more methodologies appeared. See also Stagl, *A History of Curiosity*, 49–58; Ina Baghdiantz McGabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France* (New York: Berg, 2008), 45; Höfert, "The Order of Things."

⁶⁵ The first and the last chapters give a framework for the book, while the middle part deals with the people of Algiers.

⁶⁶ Rowe, "Ethnography and Ethnology," 5.

⁶⁷ For captivity accounts as narratives, as writings that are part history and part imagination, see Margarita Levisi, "Las aventuras de Diego Galán," *Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo* 65 (1989): 109–77.

⁶⁸ Thus, when addressing the genre of travel literature, one has to consider the many "subgenres" or overlapping genres, like diplomatic and ambassadorial reports, memoirs, pilgrim itineraries, maps, merchant and navigational handbooks, letters, captivity accounts, and so on. The contents of a piece of writing also varied according to the "subgenre" it belonged to. For example, an ambassadorial report was supposed to contain more accurate information and be more objective, as it was part of state intelligence, while merchants and captives had a different kind of purpose in writing and had experienced different kinds of encounters. See also Brummett, "Genre, Witness, and Time," 1.

should be aware of while reading these kinds of accounts, such as the purpose of writing, the function of the text,⁶⁹ and the strategy of writing.⁷⁰

Although captivity writings are accounts informed by the author's experience of an alien culture, captives mostly wanted to maintain their differences and keep a distance from the Others. In this way, they sought to preserve their identity by using contrary strategies, like writing down their ordeals.⁷¹ They wrote about an experience that was shocking for its protagonist, an experience of humiliation and fear.⁷² Moreover, some accounts are a kind of "plea" and proof of the author's identity and status as someone who is still Christian and has not converted to Islam. Thus the works also contain tropes, stereotypes, and events that the author had likely never experienced. This was true of de Sosa, too. Captivity reports are ambiguous and mostly one-sided accounts of cross-cultural encounters, and as such, they should be treated with great caution and critical reflection.⁷³

Perceptions of Muslims in Spain in the Sixteenth Century

Perceptions of the Muslims or the Ottomans in these writings varied according to several factors, such as proximity to the frontier, the level of

⁶⁹ These include serving political and strategic functions (information-gathering) and religious aims, being a tool for the Redemptionists and urging conquest by showing the misery of the Christian captives there.

⁷⁰ On the one hand, the writer was willing to incorporate material that he thought the reader would expect from him. This was a strategy of authentication as well. On the other hand, the author might not have been able to comprehend the meaning of the things he saw. Colley, "Going Native"; Rodríguez, "La representación de las relaciones hispano-musulmana," 128. Next, the narratives were also self-portraits of the author (or his country, his *patria*, his church, etc.) See Rodríguez and Linda Colley for the self-representation and psychology of captivity writings; see also Bunes Ibarra, "Diego Galán, la literatura oral silenciada por el afán de prestigio literario," *Escrituras silenciadas en la época de Cervantes* (Selection of papers presented at the international conference "Escrituras silenciadas en tiempos de Cervantes," November 29 and December 2005, Alcalá de Henares, 2006), 44. It also has to be considered that they could not write everything down because of censorship and the Inquisition.

⁷¹ Or they could "preserve their identity" by their clothing or by socializing with people from their own country, or others of similar age, occupation, etc. See Colley, *Writing Captivity*, 179–80.

⁷² How someone reacted to the happenings and the new circumstances also differed and could be traced in the writings. *Ibid.*, 176–77.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 175.

contact, the degree of interest in politics, and aims. In Spain, the humanist discourse and the perception of Muslims were influenced by the centuries-old presence of Muslims on the peninsula and by the *reconquista*, along with the consolidation of the state and the process of empire-building. The situation was rather ambiguous, as the Graeco-Latin heritage was supplemented with the heritage of Islamic and Jewish cultures.⁷⁴ The homogeneity of the state (an intentionally primary Christian "Spanish identity") was disturbed by the "religious Others," by the Muslim and Jewish populations of the peninsula. They were also seen as a threat, as tools for a possible Ottoman attack or invasion, and for alliance.⁷⁵

It has been researched but is still an open issue whether coexistence influenced perceptions of the Muslims in Spanish writings, or whether they distinguished between "their Moors" (or Moriscos) and the "Turks," or applied the same tropes as the rest of Europe. Before the conquest of Granada, written Spanish accounts show some familiarity with Muslim

⁷⁴ For more about coexistence and interaction with the religious "Others" during the Middle Ages, which left a deep imprint on Spanish culture, see Luce López-Baralt, "The Legacy of Islam in Spanish Literature," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 505–52; Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 1; and Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

⁷⁵ Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*, 8. Thus after the conquest of Granada, "tolerance," based on the *capitulaciones* that promised that the Muslim inhabitants could live according to their religion and laws, diminished rapidly. Those who converted (the Moriscos) remained "suspicious elements" in the society until they were all forced to leave in 1609. This "maurophobia" in the historiography and legislation gained a powerful impetus mainly during the reign of Queen Isabella, who led a *reconquista* not only on the lands of the peninsula but also in the field of culture (see also the "Black Legend" and the accusation of "Moorishness" coming from other parts of Europe). In spite of the repressive legislation and attitude against Jews and Muslims, "maurophilia," or sympathetic attitudes towards the Moors, also persisted. It was argued that the Moorish past was also part of Spanish culture. Moorishness was a habitual presence in Iberian culture, in various degrees from region to region (customs, festivities, language, clothing, housing, etc.). Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, 80–87. Additionally, about maurophilia and maurophobia, see Luce López-Baralt, *Islam in Spanish Literature: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992). More writings dealt with North Africa (mainly Algiers and Morocco) than with the New World. The historian Ambrosio Morales (1513–1591) wrote in the preface to Mármol Carvajal's account that the latter's work was important because Africa was next to Spain and hostile, and therefore, it needed to be better understood. Cited in Miguel Angel de Bunes Ibarra, "La visión de los musulmanes en el Siglo de Oro: las bases de una hostilidad," in *Torre de los Lujanes*, vol. 47 (Madrid, 2002), 64.

culture, but it gradually disappears and is replaced by generalized European perceptions.⁷⁶ It has to be noted, however, that a distinction between Muslims of the Iberian peninsula ("Moors") and other Muslims appeared in some Spanish writings. Moors were considered to be on a higher cultural level, since they lived close to Christians in a previously Christian land. They were seen as having been capable of creating a refined culture in previous centuries, as opposed to the rest of the Muslims.⁷⁷

De Sosa makes the phenomena and places he describes more familiar to the reader by comparing them to the places and customs of Iberia. Furthermore, he provides an account of various Muslim groups living in the city, mentioning Moriscos and pointing them out as "the cruelest enemies of us Christians in Barbary."⁷⁸ However, he also argues that Muslims from Iberia are better skilled and smart. Otherwise, when de Sosa uses stereotypes for Muslims, he uses *topoi* already familiar from European accounts. He describes the "Turks" as "brute animals," lustful sodomites, and backward. He calls them "the vilest of people, stupid and villainous,"⁷⁹ engaged in a tyrannical reign.⁸⁰ Even though his writing contains harsh comments

⁷⁶ Bunes Ibarra even states that most of the writings are full of generalized European assumptions and stereotypes. Lawrence, "Europe and the Turks in Spanish Literature," 24–26; Bunes Ibarra, "La visión de los musulmanes en el Siglo de Oro," 65.

⁷⁷ Bunes Ibarra, "La visión de los musulmanes en el Siglo de Oro," 68.

⁷⁸ *Topographia*, 123.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁰ These classifications were inherited from the Middle Ages and from classical literature, but the emphasis shifted and new perceptions appeared. From the reaction of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405–1464; later Pius II), who called the event of the conquest of Constantinople "the second death of Homer" (Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 2), one can see what the humanists' fundamental "problem" was with the "Turks." They were "beasts" and "barbarians" (de Sosa simply calls them "stupid"). These writings make a point of calling "Turkish" culture and education inferior. (As I have argued, the perception of the "Turks" varied even among the early humanist writers. About Salutati, see Coluccio Salutati [1331–1406] in Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 54–57.) The opposition "heathen/Christian" was gradually replaced by the opposition "Turk/Christian," emphasizing a more secular distinguishing feature. The mono-religious worldview transformed into a multi-religious one. New alternative terms such as "sect" or "law" appeared gradually instead of the general characterization of the "Turks" (Muslims) as heretical or pagan. Descriptions of their government gained an important place in the accounts, which even praised its functioning (see, e.g., Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (1576); Baghdianz McGabe, "The Ambassador," 60–61). The conquest of Constantinople and the establishment of diplomatic and economic ties with the Ottoman Empire brought direct contact and new, more accurate information about the "Turks." On ambassadorial reports and their changing rhetoric, see Valensi, "The Making of a Political Paradigm."

regarding their culture, *Topographia* does not, on the whole, take a negative tone. It is instead a meticulous picture of the city and its inhabitants, a work with ethnographic sensibilities.

Describing and Classifying the Muslims of Late Sixteenth-Century Algiers

*“... aquel nuevo mundo tan diferente y extraño”*⁸¹

Basic Markers of Identity

When de Sosa uses categories under the rubric of “religion” and “ethnicity”⁸² for the inhabitants of Algiers, the logic of classification is unclear. The clusters that he labeled “Algerians,” “Moors,” “Turks,” and “Christians” seemingly refer to “ethnic”⁸³ categories (except for Christians). People are grouped according to their shared cultural features and values, to their origin and/or current home territory, dress, complexion, and language, and not their religion. However, a closer reading suggests that this would be a simplification, because the expression “to turn Turk or Moor” (i.e., to convert to Islam) shows that his religious and ethnic concepts could overlap, a common premise in early modern writings about the “Other.”⁸⁴ However, I will argue

⁸¹ “. . . that new world so different and strange.” De Sosa, cited in Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulation of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c2009), 55.

⁸² De Sosa also indicates the existence of a “professional identity,” an early modern phenomenon that classifies people according to their professions; thus, de Sosa writes about *kajds*, *spahis*, janissaries, etc. But I do not discuss these in detail, as I focus mainly on intra-Muslim distinctions of identity and, to a degree, on the Jews.

⁸³ I am using the term “ethnicity” according to the anthropological usage, whereby ethnicity is based upon perceived differences in origins or on shared historical and cultural heritage. Scupin and DeCorse, *Anthropology*, 225.

⁸⁴ While religion was still a fundamental category, the concept of “ethnicity,” a kind of “cultural community” with a shared home territory—expressed instead by the term “nation”—increasingly began to be emphasized. For more about the discussion of identity (religious, ethnic, regional, professional) in the early modern context, see Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople* (e.g., see Pietro della Valle’s mixed categories); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism”; Meserve, “Introduction.” I would highlight the shift of emphasis. As Robert Barlett argues, in the Middle Ages

that in his classification of various groups living in Algiers, “ethnicity” seems more important than religion, even if these concepts—that is, religious, “ethnic,” and perhaps “regional” identity—converge in his writing.⁸⁵

In Chapter 11, de Sosa establishes the main groups he is going to discuss: “Moors,” “Turks,” and “Jews.” These designations were ambiguous and ideologically loaded in early modern texts.⁸⁶ “Turk” generally meant Muslim in European practice, and this notion was confirmed by expressions such as “Turkish rites” to describe practicing Islam.⁸⁷ It was interchangeable with the expression “Mahomettan” or the medieval term “Saracen.” The term “Moor” is similarly problematic.⁸⁸ De Sosa’s unconventional method can be seen here: he conducts a deep analysis of Muslim society and is able to recognize and present it as a diverse society with different, even conflicting, groups. Moreover, Muslims are distinguished by their place of residence, appearance, and language, and their cultural differences are also shown.⁸⁹ However, other categories used by de Sosa are

too, “for the majority of medieval writers, ethnicity was defined by and manifested in culture as much as, or more than, descent.” Barlett finds that language and customs hold a central place in defining ethnicity. Robert Barlett, “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31, no. 1 (2001): 39–56.

⁸⁵ He uses the term “Algerians” to refer to “Moors, Turks, and renegades” (discussing the Jews separately) mostly when discussing dress, marriage, everyday life activities, and so on, whereas he uses the term “Muslims” mainly when writing about religious festivals or some religious rite or custom. However, his use of the terms is not systematic.

⁸⁶ The term “Turks” was also ambiguous in its Ottoman context. About the dichotomy of categorization of “Rumi” and “Turk,” see Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” in “History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the ‘Lands of Rum,’” special issue, *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7–25; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 19–28.

⁸⁷ “Turk” also indicated misfortune. Shakespeare writes: “. . . if the rest of my fortune turns Turk with me. . .” (*Hamlet* III:2).

⁸⁸ It could equally indicate any Muslim, a Muslim of North Africa, or particularly of Mauritania, but it was also used for Muslims living in Spain. About how the meaning of “Moor” changed according to historical context, see Ross Brann, “The Moors?” *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 307–18. Leo Africanus uses the term “Spanish Moor” for Hispano-Muslims.

⁸⁹ It should be noted that there were authors who made clear distinctions among these terms. Such authors included Giovanni Battista Salvago, a descendent of Venetian dragomans, who was born in Istanbul in the seventeenth century; Lorenzo Bernardo, a Venetian ambassador from the sixteenth century; and Leo Africanus. Because of their circumstances, they all claimed a familiarity with Muslim society, just as de Sosa did.

less defined, such as the notions of “Arab,” “African,” and “Berber,” as well as their relationships.⁹⁰

De Sosa starts his description with local people, the “Moors,” who lived in Algiers in an earlier era. Striving to be precise in analyzing different groups of people, he establishes sub-categories of the “Moor”: “natives of the city of Algiers itself, commonly called in their language *baldi*, which means something like ‘citizen’”; the Kabyles, a tribe from the mountains surrounding Algiers; among the Kabyles, another tribe, the Zwawa; and finally, the Bedouins. De Sosa also classifies the Hispano-Muslims as “Moors” here, as well as in the early chapters.⁹¹ In a separate chapter, the Turks are divided into two “kinds”: “Turks by nature” (born Turks) and “Turks by profession” (those who converted and became “renegades”). Thus his definition of the “Turk” also distinguishes and blurs the ethnic and religious categories, and adds a further layer in the identification of profession. He also makes a distinction between Turks from Anatolia and Romania, providing additional clarity in terms of geographical provenance to the broader category of the “Turk.”⁹²

Lastly, he writes about the Jews, although not in such detail as he does about the Moors and Turks. Yet de Sosa pays attention to the complexity and diversity of this group and divides the Jews, according to their origins, into three groups: Jews from Spain, Mallorca and the Balearic Islands; from North Africa; and from “Turkey.”⁹³

⁹⁰ He says he is not going to discuss Christians because they are not counted as inhabitants of Algiers (they “arrive here as captives and slaves,” or they are merchants who “return to [their] own land”). *Topographia*, 119.

⁹¹ De Sosa speaks of the “Arabs” who conquered Africa and the Iberian peninsula, and he refers to those who defended Orán in 1505 as “Moors.” *Ibid.*, 100. So one may conclude that de Sosa uses “Moors” to refer to Muslims who live in Iberia and North Africa. He calls Leo Africanus (who was from Granada) a “Moorish” author. He calls those who had immigrated from Granada, Valencia, and Aragón to Barbary the “Moors.” *Ibid.*, 122. In de Sosa’s account, the “Moor” also includes “Arabs,” “Africans,” and “Berbers.” The terms are used more freely by Leo Africanus—e.g., de Sosa writes that the Kabyles are “the ancient and natural Africans” (*Topographia*, 120). By contrast, when talking about North Africa, Leo Africanus uses mostly the terms “Arab” and “African” and also speaks of “Berbers” when referring to the tribes in the countryside.

⁹² Salvago also speaks about these sub-categories of “Turks.” See E. Natalie Rothman, “Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone: Giovanni Battista Salvago and his *Africa Overo Barbaria* (1625),” in *Renaissance Medievalisms*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009): 123–43.

⁹³ The Jewish congregations were obliged to ransom the Jewish captives. For more, see, e.g., Franz Babinger, ed., *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1553/55)* (Munich and Leipzig, 1923): 109–10 and pas-

For de Sosa, the basic primary markers of identity are place of living, then appearance (complexion, build of the body, special markers like tattoos),⁹⁴ profession, and clothing.⁹⁵ Factors that define a group within the category of the “Moor” (the same is true for Turks and Jews) indicate their place in a hierarchy that de Sosa devises. The list starts with the *baldi*, a “citizen” who lives in an urban environment and who ranks higher in the hierarchy of civilization than tribal people (a classical trope also embraced by Renaissance authors).⁹⁶ This supposedly higher civilizational stage is also reflected in the complexion and build of the body. The hierarchy places the *baldi* on top, with their “partly white and partly tan”⁹⁷ skin, and white, shapely women, and puts the Bedouins at the bottom, due to their being “ugly, ill-featured, of skin and bones, tan or very dark brown in color” and uncleanness.⁹⁸ Such classification of people according to their com-

sim; Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Garcia Mendes* (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2003); Marianna D. Birnbaum, “The Fugers, Hans Dernschwam, and the Ottoman Empire,” *Südost-Forschungen* 50 (1991): 119–44.

⁹⁴ Sometimes de Sosa puts their actual number, living in Algiers, in the second place. Leo Africanus also saw it as important to indicate the numbers of inhabitants. It conveyed the impression that the writer was well-informed, precise, and reliable. Furthermore, if the numbers were accurate, they could be of strategic importance.

⁹⁵ It must be noted that he omits from his discussion the question of “origin,” which was a favored topic of the humanists of the fifteenth century like Piccolomini, Flavio Biondo, and Lauro Quirini. Instead he uses “regional” categorization, which sets him apart from earlier writings. For the fifteenth-century humanist writings about the origin of the “Turks,” see Meserve, “Introduction.”

⁹⁶ It was derived from Greek political theory, whereby living in the city meant a level of “civility” (being a good citizen) and supposed some form of education, an ability to produce goods, and so on. Seymour Phillips, “The Outer World of the European Middle Ages,” in *Implicit Understanding: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (New York: Cambridge University Press: 1994), 50. This dichotomy between people living within and outside the city walls appears in Leo Africanus’s work, too. See Rothman, “Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone,” 135.

⁹⁷ *Topographia*, 119.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 122. The same applies to the Turks, as he regards Turks from Rumelia as whiter and more “lively and talented,” whereas Turks from Anatolia are much darker and “more simple-minded.” *Ibid.*, 124. Leo Africanus characterized the inhabitants of the whole of “Berbera” as “white-skinned,” and that implied something positive. Laura Lara Martínez and María Lara Martínez, “Descripción general de África y origen del nombre del continente según León el Africano y Luis del Mámol Carvajal,” *Clásicos mínimos on Archivo de la frontera* (2005), <http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/wp-content/uploads/2005/02/CLASICOS009.pdf>. Cervantes writes about Zoraida, the “Moorish” heroine of “The Captive’s Tale,” having “una muy blanca mano” [a very white hand]. Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, 412.

plexion appears frequently in the writings of the sixteenth-century authors and was based primarily on the Bible. Blackness was seen as a sign of sin, as well as a sign of inferiority to European people.⁹⁹ Furthermore, occupation indicates usefulness in society. The *baldi* are merchants and shopkeepers, producers (mainly of foodstuffs), laborers, artisans, and cattle and livestock farmers; the Kabyles are "serving Turks or rich Moors";¹⁰⁰ the Zwawa are soldiers and useful to the Turks as auxiliary troops, while their women serve wealthier women, weave, or knit. Lastly, the Bedouins are only a nuisance to society.

The fourth group of Moors is described in the following manner. "Those who came over these parts from the kingdoms of Granada, Aragón, Valencia, and Catalonia"¹⁰¹ fall into two groups: the *Mudéjares* from Granada and Andalucía, and the *Tagarinos* from Aragón, Valencia, and Catalonia. De Sosa sees these Hispano-Muslims¹⁰² as superior to any other group because they are "white and well proportioned"¹⁰³ and because they know every kind of

⁹⁹ Africans were considered the descendants of Ham (one of Noah's sons), who was cursed because he saw the nakedness of his father. Thus the people of Ham were to be the servants of both the descendents of Shem (Semitic people, people of Asia—according to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ideas) and of Iaphet (people of Europe). The superiority of Europe was settled this way as well. See more: Phillips, "The Outer World of the European Middle Ages," 44; Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 224. Although de Sosa does not use the concepts of "Europe" and "European people," he still uses the widely known concept of dark skin as an indicator of inferiority. Despite this concept's religious roots, the distinction and categorization of people according to external markers, together with the concept of "civilizational" levels, prefigures the racial thinking that informs nineteenth-century anthropology and colonial discourse. Considering skin and body type together also indicates the beginning of the "science" of physiognomy, which was very popular not only in early modern Europe but in the Muslim world as well. Martin Porter, *Windows of the Soul: The Art of Physiognomy in European Culture 1470–1780* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine, Healing and Medical Institutions, 1500–1700* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ *Topographia*, 120.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁰² Mudéjares and Tagarinos were Muslim people who remained in the Iberian peninsula without converting to Christianity after the conquest of Granada (1492).

¹⁰³ Barbara Fuchs examined notary documents from the second half of the sixteenth century about redeeming captives from North Africa and claims that these documents specifying the color of the slaves speak of the color of the Moriscos being anything from "negro" to "blanco." Thus "the fact that all these different shades are detailed makes it impossible to establish any standard physical appearance for Moriscos," which made "certain Moriscos" "indistinguishable . . . from 'real' Spaniards." Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*, 153. Yet de Sosa describes all Moriscos as "white," perhaps because of the aforementioned belief in their "superiority" over other Muslims.

craft. (They served as manufacturers of harquebuses and gunpowder, blacksmiths, or builders). In this way, he follows contemporary Spanish literature, which regards "Moriscos" as being on a higher cultural level than the other Muslims.¹⁰⁴ Yet de Sosa emphasizes how dangerous they are for Christianity, especially for Spain, and calls them the "cruellest enemies of *us Christians* in Barbary, because they can never get enough Christian blood."¹⁰⁵

Other inhabitants of Algiers that rouse his emotions are the "Turks." They are described in a negative tone throughout the text. De Sosa characterizes their bodies as "robust" and suggests that their education lacked sophistication, "because since childhood they are reared with neither fear nor good manners."¹⁰⁶ Despite his criticism of the Turks, however, de Sosa also admits that "some turned out to be men of worth and valor."¹⁰⁷ Calling them "men" is an indication of the presence of the concept of homogenous human nature in the text.¹⁰⁸ However, the *topos* of "beast" from the previous era also appears, but only as an allegory: "like brute animals they are given free rein in all manner and vice that materializes or appeals to the flesh."¹⁰⁹ Even though the explanation for the origin of the corsairs varied, de Sosa includes the corsairs in his discussion of the "Turks," because they are "Turks by profession."¹¹⁰ The renegades are not "real" Muslims, and he

¹⁰⁴ Bunes Ibarra, "La visión de los musulmanes en el Siglo de Oro," 68.

¹⁰⁵ *Topographia*, 122. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 124. Salvago also writes about them negatively, mainly about "Barbary Turks," among whom the Turks from Anatolia ("coward, uncouth and rustic") were the most numerous and eminent. He writes that in Istanbul the "Turks" themselves made the same distinctions, considering the Anatolians to be "uncouth and rustic as opposed to Europeans, who are deemed to be valorous, while they [Anatolian Turks] are deemed to be cowardly." In Barbary, "Turks" were the administrative elite, and Salvago refers to them as the "creators" of Barbary. These Turks are considered adventurers, outlaws, and marginal elements—swindlers, vagabonds, murderers—of Ottoman society. See Rothman, "Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone."

¹⁰⁷ *Topographia*, 124.

¹⁰⁸ The concept of a homogenous human nature emerged in the fifteenth century. Describing remote territories as being inhabited by mysterious creatures and the like was a characteristic of writings of the ancient era and the Middle Ages, and it gradually disappeared from the fifteenth century on. The same applies to the "Turks" being depicted as wild beasts and a "monstrous race." Höfert, "The Order of Things," 42–43.

¹⁰⁹ *Topographia*, 124.

¹¹⁰ According to de Sosa's catalogue of corsairs, there were twenty-two renegades and three sons of renegades out of the thirty-five corsairs he lists by name, but there were also twelve renegades and one "of the Jewish nation" (certainly also a renegade) among the twenty-three *ka'ids* of Algiers before 1581.

depicts them as “not legitimate Muslims.”¹¹¹ They converted only because of the benefits of being a Muslim, and of “lust, sodomy, and gluttony.”¹¹² Chapter 13 is dedicated to them by using many already known *topoi*: de Sosa lists here the reasons for their “forsaking the true path of God.”¹¹³ He also reviews the economic grounds for “turning Turk” as a more down-to-earth or materialistic explanation. At one point, de Sosa hands over the narrative to the “doctor of law” who discusses renegade inheritances by drawing parallels and even noting a similarity between Christian and “Turkish” law, calling it the “same as what common law dictates among Christians.”¹¹⁴ Here he brings the two worlds closer by pointing out some similarities, instead of stressing their fundamental differences. Renegades, for instance, are accused of being the principal enemies of the Christian religion, partly because of their great numbers¹¹⁵ and their strategic knowledge of Christian lands (since they knew the language and could easily seep into Christian territory without being recognized). Moreover, renegades put their skills and manpower into the service of the enemy and betrayed Christianity.¹¹⁶ It is worth repeating that de Sosa’s master was a renegade, and he had experienced bad treatment firsthand. Renegades are also depicted as people who want, in most cases, to reconvert. Many renegades claim to be Christians inside and Muslims only outwardly.¹¹⁷ He

¹¹¹ *Topographia*, 210. The same appears in various other writings; for example, Lorenzo Bernardo writes in his *Relazione*: “As a matter of fact, I have known many of these renegades who had no religious beliefs, and said religions were invented by men for political reasons. They hold that when the body dies the soul dies, just as it does with brute beasts, which they are.” Bernardo, “Its Decline May Now Be under Way,” 157–58.

¹¹² *Topographia*, 228.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹¹⁵ “Almost all the power and dominion, and government and riches of Algiers and the entire kingdom resides in them” (*Ibid.*, 127). Sosa puts the number of their households at 6,000 or more, which Garcés estimates amounts to 50,000–60,000 people. Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 321.

¹¹⁶ In the eyes of the Christian ecclesiastical establishment, of which de Sosa was a member, converting to Islam was the greatest sin.

¹¹⁷ Here de Sosa again introduces his personal judgment, stating that those people would go to hell. *Topographia*, 228. Conversion was a topic frequently discussed in writings of the early modern period. Their number and the ease with which renegades crossed religious frontiers was striking for their contemporaries. The possibility of conversion was certainly attractive because climbing the social ladder was easier in the Muslim world; this violated social rules in the eyes of inhabitants of Christian Europe, where everyone’s place in society was, for the most part, fixed. The

sees the renegades as tricksters who convert to gain wealth, power, and position.¹¹⁸

De Sosa does not have a good opinion of the Jews either: he emphasizes their love of money and their activity of counterfeiting money (which follows the Christian cliché in polemical writings about the “usurious Jew”), as well as their bad treatment of Christian captives. However, he also notes the humiliation and indignity the Muslims inflict on the Jews: “for the slightest complaint or on a slender occasion, they skin them alive.”¹¹⁹

The three main “ethnic” groups—Moors, Turks, and Jews¹²⁰—are discussed separately, and de Sosa introduces the primary characteristics of each according to his own criteria throughout the text. His descriptions are detailed, distinctions are carefully delineated, and he often flavors his narrative with exciting stories.¹²¹ The fundamental distinction between “us” and “them”—Christians and Algerians—is set at the very beginning, in the opening line of the first chapter: Algiers is well known for “the great and ceaseless harm its people inflict on all the coasts and provinces of the Christian world.”¹²²

term “Turk by profession” is connected with “professional identity;” renegades are accused of being “atheists” as they only converted because of the expected benefits. This is de Sosa’s main accusation against them as well. The female converts are described more positively in the sources and in de Sosa’s account too. They are seen as too weak to resist the pressures to convert. See Tijana Krstić, “Everyday Communal Politics of Coexistence and Orthodox Christian Martyrdom,” in *Contested Conversions*, 157, 161. For the advantages for a woman to convert to Islam, see Marc Baer, “Islamic Conversion Narratives of Women: Social Change and Gendered Religious Hierarchy in Early Modern Ottoman Istanbul,” *Gender and History* 16, no. 2 (August 2004): 426.

¹¹⁸ Cervantes had two views on renegades. On the one hand, he depicts them as those who want to return to Christianity and so help Christian slaves in whatever way they can. (About renegades who helped Christian captives in order to gain letters of recommendation, see Chapter 3 of Hershenson, “Early Modern Spain,” 59–103.) On the other hand, Cervantes criticizes them, saying “he himself [the renegade] obtains the object he so much desired, his restoration to the bosom of the Holy Mother Church, from which by his own sin and ignorance he was now severed like a corrupt limb.” Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 413.

¹¹⁹ *Topographia*, 182.

¹²⁰ Although de Sosa also discusses renegades, apart from some comments on their weak faith, he puts them in the same group as Moors and Turks when he talks about their customs.

¹²¹ Such as the story of the cross (literally) carved into the Zwawa faces indicating their “Christianity” in the past (*Topographia*, 121), or the origin of the horsetail that the janissaries used in battle. *Ibid.*, 144.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 93. It also implies a certain sense of “*unitas Christiana*” on the part of the author, who uses the pronoun “us” to denote the “Christians.” (De Sosa also mentions European nations such as the Germans, the French, and the Galicians.)

Dislike of the Turks is also expressed from the very beginning and pervades the text. In this way it faithfully follows contemporary Christian writings. One of his main accusations against the "Turks" (besides labeling them tyrannical, cruel, and lecherous) is that they are villainous and stupid,¹²³ which also indicates that he regards "reason" and "sense" as important qualities. This is reflected in his methodology and style of writing: he tries to be as precise and detailed as possible, with logical arguments or explanations of the "insider's" position. Then he employs comparisons to make the given topics comprehensible to his readers.

Everyday Themes and Categories for Classification

In order to present his information in an understandable way, the author had to employ categories for classifying the socio-cultural system of the city. Although de Sosa mainly followed the categories devised by other sixteenth-century travelers, his specific editorial choices within these larger categories, and his manner of representation, are noteworthy.¹²⁴ He focuses on everyday activities and themes such as dress, language, marriage, childbirth and childrearing, pastimes, home decoration, cooking and food, religious festivals, burials, and religious customs and rites.¹²⁵ These topics served to show the great diversity among the inhabitants of Algiers, and their differences from (or sometimes similarities to) "Christian" culture. Moreover, by identifying the diverging patterns among the dwellers of the city, de Sosa provided potentially valuable information for the Inquisition, which gathered any kind of data that could help in recognizing and

¹²³ De Sosa calls the "Turks" "barbarian" (only in a few places) as a synonym for stupid and senseless. The emphasis on education and "arts" can be seen when he is talking about the Arabs and accusing them of ruining the liberal arts by naming things differently. This calls to mind Piccolomini's accusation against the Turks upon the conquest of Constantinople, claiming that they were trampling on the laws and the liberal arts, with the difference that de Sosa is worried about names and words, as was typical of his time.

¹²⁴ For more on the methodology of ethnographical writings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Margaret Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 167; Stagl, "A History of Curiosity"; Höfert, "The Order of Things."

¹²⁵ Within the mentioned themes, de Sosa also touched upon topics such as games, education, magic, circumcision, and the calendar.

convicting crypto-Muslims (and crypto-Jews).¹²⁶ The discussion of all the customs and rites that de Sosa mentions falls outside the scope of this study. Thus I shall focus on those that reveal the most about his perceptions and sensibilities of being a Christian, a "Spaniard," a cleric, and a legal expert, while also keeping in mind the potential readers of his text.

Dress and Language

The two "external" factors, clothing and language, were among the main concerns of the Spanish monarchy, as is apparent from the legislation against the Moriscos that led to the revolt of the Alpujarras.¹²⁷ While de Sosa mostly discusses what is worn by "Algerians" ("Turks, Moors, and renegades"), he notes and gives an account of regional and "ethnic" differences.

¹²⁶ The title of Carlo Ginzburg's essay "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist" is telling, because it suggests the detailed nature of the inquisitorial inquiry (questions asked of suspects and "witnesses") and its similarity to that of a modern anthropologist. The questions touched upon every nuanced aspect of the lives of the "religious others" (Muslims and Jews), especially external markers, beliefs, norms, religious rites, and everyday customs. The Inquisition also gathered and analyzed reports (travel writings, captivity narratives, etc.) produced about Muslims and Jews. See Carlo Ginzburg, "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist," in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics*, ed. Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*.

¹²⁷ The legislation did not target the domain of religion but regulated cultural and even daily life. One of its aims was to forbid the Moriscos of Granada to dress as they had customarily done; it called upon them to dress as people did in Castile. It also forbade the use of Arabic. Morisco leader Francisco Nuñez Muley, arguing against the legislation, pointed to the fact that the clothing worn in Granada was an indicator of regional and not religious identity, just as Christians dressed differently in different parts of Spain and Europe. See Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*, 102–4; Joseph Pérez, *The Spanish Inquisition: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). Furthermore, clothes (and hairstyle) were of great importance in Europe as well, in the sense that they had not only functional roles but also symbolic meanings and served as signs of shared beliefs and values that communicated different messages (such as age, social status, and wealth). Consider, for instance, the many costume books printed from the fifteenth century onward. *Clothing Culture, 1350–1650*, ed. Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Nicholas de Nicolay's account of his travels in the Mediterranean can also be considered a costume book of the area. De Sosa too considers the functioning of clothing (such as the religious consideration for the length of the sleeves) to be another useful source for the Inquisition.

For instance, the people from Constantinople (and “Romania”), who had not bought new clothes yet, “walk about in garments worn in Turkey. These differ considerably from Algerian fashions. . .”¹²⁸ Another important distinction indicated by dress and hairstyle is between Jews and Muslims, particularly because of the restrictions imposed on Jews: “no Jew is allowed to wear shoes of any color.”¹²⁹ They usually wore black clothing, as they were required to do in Europe.¹³⁰

De Sosa extensively discusses Algerian women, and he notes the same “ethnic” difference: “The dress of women is not entirely uniform.”¹³¹ Jewish women dress like Muslim ones except for the shoes, as “they wear slippers of black leather,”¹³² and they do not go out covered like Muslim women do.¹³³ Apart from “ethnic” differences, social stratification (wealth and reputation) are also indicated by both clothing and facial hair (in the case of men’s long beards).¹³⁴ Wealthy women wear “a round beretta of brocade or of satin, or damask” on their heads, and they adorn themselves¹³⁵ with “countless pearls and gemstones.”¹³⁶ De Sosa marks the cultural distance between “Christians” and “Algerians” throughout the chapters. In the case

¹²⁸ *Topographia*, 172.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹³⁰ Even within their own group, Jews’ clothes varied according to where they hailed from (Spanish lands, Mallorca, Africa, “Turkey,” etc.).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 202.

¹³³ *Ibid.* He explains this without mentioning religious considerations; he claims only that Muslim husbands are jealous and care about maintaining their reputation: *ibid.*, 193. The idea of “Muslims” being jealous appears in other writers’ accounts. See, for instance, Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, vol. 1, book 1, 183.

¹³⁴ The leading status of the janissaries is also signified by their peculiar garb, whose exclusivity is taken seriously: “neither Moor nor Turk nor renegade can wear this edging on this clothing, under penalty of a life sentence.” *Ibid.*, 172. The distinguished status of the janissaries is noted here, but it is discussed in more detail in Chapter 20 (“Customs of the Janissaries in Peacetime”).

¹³⁵ Cervantes’s captive says about his “beloved Zoraida”: “I will content myself with saying that more pearls hung from her fair neck, her ears, and her hair than she had hairs on her head. . .” and he says she wears anklets of the “purest gold” with diamonds. Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Francisco Rico (Madrid: Punto de Lectura, 2012), 421. I used John Ormsby’s translation of *Don Quixote* on E-Books Directory (<http://e-bookdirectory.com>). Leo Africanus calls the rings and ankle bracelets a “fashion of the Africans” (Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, 159).

¹³⁶ *Topographia*, 199.

of Muslim women, their body painting grabs his attention.¹³⁷ His lengthy description shows a fascination with this custom, "different from that used by Christian women,"¹³⁸ as were the large earrings and many scents and oils the Algerians used. However, cultural similarities also find their way into his discussion, as he mentions that women in Iberia dress "*a la morisca*."¹³⁹

The cultural diversity of Algiers is also manifested in various "languages" and dialects spoken here: "Turkish," spoken basically by the "Turks"; "Arabic," spoken by the Moors; and "*lingua franca*," which was the "contact vernacular," mainly used in the Mediterranean.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, he speaks of further dialects¹⁴¹—here he uses the word "language"—in which Moors

¹³⁷ They "paint designs on their cheeks, chin, and forehead, such as marks, cloves, and rosettes." *Topographia*, 200.

¹³⁸ He remarks on it critically (albeit with a dash of humor, so typical of his negative comments): "In truth, this habit turns those who are beautiful quite ugly, and the ugly women, to a great degree, even uglier." *Ibid.*, 200. Leo Africanus, for whom those female beauty practices were not strange, says that body painting is a "most decent custom." He claims that this custom was introduced by the Arabs. Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, 159.

¹³⁹ *Topographia*, 199. He recognizes another similarity in the custom of wearing damascene knives on the left-hand side, "the same way our Spanish Galicians do": *ibid.*, 169. In the chapters about fashion, the reader finds references to active trading between Algiers and Europe, with textiles coming from England, Flanders, and Valencia. Leo Africanus also mentions foreign wool that wealthier persons wear, and he regards it as a sign of "civility." Both Leo Africanus and de Sosa view trade as an important connection between the two sides of the Mediterranean, leading to cultural similarities.

¹⁴⁰ De Sosa says that the "Moors" and "Turks" use the *lingua franca* to speak with Christians, and they use the term "to name both the language and mode of Christian speech" (*Topographia*, 185). *Lingua franca* was the "contact vernacular": It contained vocabulary from Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese (as de Sosa also writes). It has generated heated debates regarding the meaning of the term and the origin and usage of the vernacular and its implications. See more: Henry and Renée Kahane, "Lingua Franca: The Story of a Term," *Romance Philology* 30, no. 1 (1976): 25–41; Jocelyn Dakhlia, *Lingua franca* (Arles: Actes sud., 2008); John E. Wansbrough, *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean* (Curzon Press, 1996). Cervantes also defines *lingua franca* in his works ("The Captive's Tale," *Los baños de Argel*, *El trato de Argel*, etc.) as "the language that all over Barbary and even in Constantinople is the medium between captives and Moors . . . a mixture of languages." Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 421.

¹⁴¹ "Dialects are linguistic differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or syntax that may differ within a single language." Scupin and DeCorse, *Anthropology*, 273. De Sosa refers to these as "diction and pronunciation." Leo Africanus speaks about the same issue: "Moreouer they haue among them another diuersitie, not onely of pronunciation, but of significant words also. . ." He could have been the source here for de Sosa. *The History and Description of Africa*, vol. 1, book 1, 134.

speak, although “they conform to each other, both in many of their words and modes of speaking.”¹⁴² Another difference is “diction and pronunciation,” which varies among the Kabyles, the Arabs, and the Baldi, because of the corruption of the “Arabs of Arabia” that occurred when they conquered Barbary.¹⁴³ Furthermore, as a European intellectual, de Sosa viewed Muslims with an air of superiority.¹⁴⁴ He accuses Muslims of not knowing “how to vary modes, tenses, and cases as do the Christians. . .”¹⁴⁵ This concern for “language” and “naming” can be seen in Chapter 2 (“Why the City Is Called Algiers”), where he criticizes the Arabs for renaming cities and forests. He writes: “this plague of naming so ruined the liberal arts . . . especially those privileged by some Arabs as a profession—Philosophy, Astrology, and Medicine—that however much learned men have labored to clean up the Augean stables, they have not been able to stamp out an infinite number of Arabic words and names that highly contaminate these sciences and professions.”¹⁴⁶

Ceremonies and Everyday Life

The most important ceremonies of Maghreb communities were associated with childbirth, the circumcision of boys or haircutting of girls, marriage and burial, and Islamic religious festivals, such as the Ramadan, the “small

¹⁴² *Topographia*, 184. Leo Africanus says the same. See Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, vol. 1, 133.

¹⁴³ Here he agrees with Leo Africanus, who writes about Arabs “corrupting” the language of the Berbers and vice versa. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 134; Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, vol. 1, book 1, 134.

¹⁴⁴ Cervantes calls the language of the Moors “la bastarda lengua.” *Ibid.*, 423. Names were important in the early modern period, as is clear from the fact that the sixteenth-century traveler and “observer” was required to note both the old and the new names of the place that he had visited according to the methodology of travel (or *ars apodemica*). Höfert, “The Order of Things,” 59. Peter Burke in his book *Languages and Communities* explores the process of “discovering languages” from the mid-fifteenth century, when people became conscious of varieties of languages (for instance, consider the function of the language as an object of criticism by religious reformers). Around 1500, interest appears in the history of languages and linguistic diversity, a discussion on issues that today would form a part of “socio-linguistics.” Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15–16.

¹⁴⁵ *Topographia*, 185.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

festival" of breaking of the fast, and the "Great Festival" of the sacrifice.¹⁴⁷ The deeper his analysis of the customs and rites of Algerians, the less he relies on written sources.¹⁴⁸

Topics of marriage and burial customs are explained with numerous references to the symbolism of religious rites that clearly distinguish a socio-cultural community. They also serve to highlight differences from Christian customs, such as the practice of polygamy among Muslims.¹⁴⁹ When discussing marriage, de Sosa mentions that "lineage or nobility" did not matter when choosing a wife (who could even be a converted Jew), which must have been astonishing to the audience in Christian Europe, where a strict hierarchy, based on origin and kinship, obtained when considering marriage. Although Muslims married regardless of origin, they preferred to choose a bride from certain groups. Renegades (hence former Christians) were more "perfect and diligent" and better looking.¹⁵⁰ The other case, which is "very contrary to those [customs] in the Christian world,"¹⁵¹ is the issue of dowry and the marriage arranged by go-betweens.

Furthermore, de Sosa gives a detailed description of Islamic, and also supposedly typically North African, customs and burial rites, such as preparing the body, praying by the marabouts (Muslim religious teachers),

¹⁴⁷ De Sosa's description of the ceremonies and customs resembles the secondary literature about Berbers in North Africa, which indicates how careful his observations were on cultural phenomena he experienced firsthand. See, for instance, David Hart, *Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2000) and Edmund Doutté, *Magie & Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Alger: Typ. A. Jourdan, 1909).

¹⁴⁸ His "sources" are people, as is indicated by the often-employed phrases like "as I heard" or "having debated with some of them" (*Topographia*, 181) or "when asked why . . . they responded that. . ." (*ibid.*, 218). Consequently, his account contains numerous legends or stories that illustrate his statements. For instance, see the legend of Uluç Ali: *ibid.*, 213.

¹⁴⁹ This was of great interest in Europe, which expressed both great indignation at and fascination with this "barbarous" custom. But de Sosa only gives an insider's explanation for this notion (to keep husbands from committing "sin with other women": *Topographia*, 188). Later, discussing women, he comments that it is "in accordance with the carnal liberty that Muhammad allows them" and it is in contradiction with "natural reason." *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁵⁰ He states that "ordinarily these men [Algerians] take the greatest pride in marrying renegades." *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 189. The issue of dowry appears in Cervantes's *Los Baños de Argel*: "it's customary for the husband to pay the dowry, not the wife." In Miguel de Cervantes, *The Bagnios of Algiers* and *The Great Sultana: Two Plays of Captivity*, ed. and trans. Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J. Ilika (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 15.

putting the body "over some tomb of their marabouts and saints,"¹⁵² tossing the deceased's turban on the ground three times, insisting on silence at the grave, or scratching their bodies in mourning. In the case of burials, the difference between a Muslim and a Jew was denoted not only in their ceremonies but in their places of burial.¹⁵³ He notes how Muslims mistreated Jews during their rituals, especially at funerals: "But until they arrive outside of the city, they do not dare to recite their psalms or prayers, because the Turkish and Moorish boys would pelt them with a hail of stones."¹⁵⁴ He also discusses Muslim intolerance towards Christians¹⁵⁵ and the double standards applied in their society. Inequality in Algerian society is not limited to Jews and Christians but is prevalent within different Muslim groups, too. The author discusses legal issues such as the "repudiation" (divorce) of women in court, issues of inheritance, testaments, witnessing, and testimony, and other judicial treatments.¹⁵⁶ He also presents the opposition between Moors and Turks and discusses the conflicts among them. The tensions between the two groups were indicated at the beginning of *Topographia* in relation to the history of Algiers:

¹⁵² *Topographia*, 248.

¹⁵³ There is even a separate place for the janissaries. *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 251. The oppression and harsh circumstances of Jews are described in a Castilian account, which claims that Jews who had immigrated from Spain suffered such bad treatment upon their arrival to North Africa that some chose to return to the Iberian peninsula. Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 137. Leo Africanus describes their situation in Fez, stating that they were in *dhimmi* status and were obliged to wear distinctive clothing and headdress and behave in a "deferential manner" as well as to pay tribute or poll tax to the sultan. Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 131.

¹⁵⁵ "If a Christian voluntarily gives or presents anything to a Muslim, they say they are not obliged to remunerate, pay back, nor even show gratitude for it, for it is owed them" because God ordered it like this—this was the answer of a Moor: "Look, my Christian friend, Allah . . . orders the Christian to behave nicely to the Moor, but not vice versa" (*Topographia*, 225). This notion is *gotomia*. Garcés suggests that *gotomia* is a slang word used in North Africa and which came from the root of the verb *kata-ma* in Arabic, meaning to hide or to suppress, repress, or subdue. Garcés, *An Early Modern Dialogue*, 343.

¹⁵⁶ Here he states that when a Muslim dies, his children inherit his goods, but "if a Turk or renegade has daughters or a male child, the patrimony is divided equally among them; but if he is a Moor, the Grand Turk, or the king of Algiers, is substituted in place of a child. . ." (*Topographia*, 227). In the same way there is a great difference in how people are treated in the case of adultery. In the government of Algiers, de Sosa notes the superiority of the Turks: there are two *kadis*, a "Turk" and a "Moor," and "there is this preeminence": the Moors can appeal to the "Turkish" *kadi* but not the other way around. *Ibid.*, 266.

. . . the Turks having loudly declared him [Barbarossa] throughout the city as lord of Algiers, the Moors remained greatly stricken with fright and, not daring to resist the Turks, were forced to consent and subject themselves to the yoke and lordship of Barbarossa. . .¹⁵⁷

De Sosa goes so far as to claim that the Moors are so badly treated by the "incomparable pride" of the Turks that "even as Muslims these Moors sigh repeatedly for the Christian armada that will liberate them from such an evil and perverse people, as all the world knows."¹⁵⁸ This careful depiction of intra-religious distinctions and oppositions in the Muslim community of Algiers is an entirely novel presentation.¹⁵⁹

The women of Algiers are depicted with great care by de Sosa. This can be explained in part by their intriguing role in religious activities in the societies of the Maghreb, both in the public and private spheres. Their specific task was to visit marabouts' tombs and make offerings, and to visit the tombs of family members.¹⁶⁰ His description of women's religious

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 103.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 233. The theme of people awaiting liberation (and hence the need to conquer the land) appears not only when de Sosa speaks about the miseries of the Christian captives but also when he writes about female renegades who still "commend themselves to our Lord Jesus Christ . . . they await the day when the Christian armada arrives in Algiers." Ibid., 229.

¹⁵⁹ Only later, in the seventeenth century, Salvago, the Venetian envoy to North Africa, makes similar distinctions and describes differences among the Muslims of Algiers and of Istanbul, and about the social distinctions between the Ottoman metropolitan and the provincial elite. He mentions the "Anatolian Turks" arriving in Barbary with a disdain for the "European Turks" and making themselves the leaders of Barbary. Rothman, "Self-Fashioning," 123. De Sosa's distinguishing between groups of Muslims and stressing their bad relationship could be of strategic importance to Christians—a potential ally against the "Turks." This idea is also discussed by Margaret Meserve, who states that some humanists presented certain Muslim polities as "good" empires of Islam to single them out as potential allies against the Ottomans. Meserve, "Introduction," 3.

¹⁶⁰ Visiting the dead members of the family is also described at greater length in the chapter discussing death and burial. This important activity of women in Algerian society also appears in the account of Joseph Pitts, an English captive, who spent part of his slavery in Algiers (his account *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammedans* . . . was published in 1704). As Pitts puts it, "the women flock out thousands in the morning to visit the sepulchers of their deceased relations, weeping over their graves and petitioning to them. . . . The women also pay their visits to the marabouts." Joseph Pitts, "Religion and Manners of the Mohammedans," in Vitkus and Matar, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*, 254.

practices (particularly of Muslim women)¹⁶¹ focuses on their seeking the intercession of the supernatural that de Sosa associates with the occult spirits and “witchcraft.”¹⁶² Since these women are not disciplined by the churchmen, he says only that they “never cease drawing lots and casting spells, removing teeth, grinding bones . . . and calling up *devils*.” “Dancing in the same manner, the *devil* enters them in the same way. . .”¹⁶³ In Algiers fortune-tellers “have a familiar spirit, who they claim enters into their heads.” De Sosa depicts how certain women dance and fall into a trance; he says “aged Black women” are best at this.¹⁶⁴

De Sosa discusses home decoration and cooking among the pastime activities of women. This seems to be a good opportunity for him to repeat his charges against Muslim women. He accuses them of laziness and of doing very “few things” during the day except for chewing and eating. He shows no familiarity with either the household items he lists or the furnishings and style of Algerian homes, although according to Barbara Fuchs, Muslim-style home decoration in Spain persisted even well into the sev-

¹⁶¹ De Sosa writes that Christian men and women are banned from the premises where the rite is practiced.

¹⁶² De Sosa reports on women “proficient in sorcery” casting spells in order to be loved or to have good fortunes, as well as for their family’s well-being (to succeed in marrying off daughters). He also writes that women cure illnesses with the help of the *djinn*s. Even today, in Morocco people believe that some women have a talent in magic and an ability to engage with the divine. See Ruth Margolies Beitler and Angelica R. Martinez, *Women’s Roles in the Middle East and North Africa* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2010), 114–15. Here one should note the issue (and a debate about its existence in the fifteenth century) of witches and sorcery in early modern Europe, a frequent accusation against people before the Inquisition. In 1537, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Spain issued instructions to the regional courts on how to handle such cases. Pérez, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 81.

¹⁶³ *Topographia*, 206. Italics mine.

¹⁶⁴ “Worth noting here is that there are some aged Black women among them who say wonderful things.” *Ibid.*, 206. Joseph Pitts tells a story in which a black woman helped him find his stolen jacket. This black woman could “as they say, tell fortunes, and inform people where their lost goods are.” Joseph Pitts, “Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans,” 308. Leo Africanus also depicts fortune-tellers, “diviners,” and conjurers in Fez, who practice with the help of the devil: “and the diuels giue them answere with beckning, or with some gesture of their hands or eies.” His tone is judgmental: “so inconsiderate and damnable is their credulitie in this behalf.” He also mentions women dancing “strangely at the noise of drums.” Otherwise his account of fortune-telling and “witchcraft” is not as detailed as de Sosa’s. Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa*, vol. 2, book 3, 457–59.

enteenth century.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, he is lavish in his descriptions of the festivals and games of the “small festival”¹⁶⁶ in Algiers, where he shows familiarity with the customs and phenomenon of celebrating separately according to “race” or “nation”:

The children get together in small groups to dance separated by race, just as in Seville and Lisbon they separate the Blacks of Guinea, because the Kabyles stay in one part, the Moors of the Sahara in another, and the Blacks in yet another. And the Black women also come together, and each nation dances and plays its drums and flutes according to its own custom.¹⁶⁷

He also mentions the *juegos de cañas* or jousting games, which must have been familiar to Spanish readers.¹⁶⁸ In this chapter de Sosa gives an account of the Christians who “celebrate and enjoy the good times” as well, forgetting their miseries, but this is the only mention of them that does not emphasize the misfortune of their captivity in the city.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Barbara Fuchs cites as an example Lope de Vega’s house (which became a museum), which was furnished with pillows on the floor and items of Moorish provenance. See Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, 143. She quotes Helen Nader, who says that “until late in the seventeenth century, Christian women sat on the floor Muslim style; to accommodate this custom, in the women’s salon, a low platform (*estrado*) covered with carpets and cushions occupied most of the floor space.” Fuchs, “The Spanish Race,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 94.

¹⁶⁶ In North Africa, according to de Sosa, the most celebrated festivals are the “small festival” after Ramadan (*al-Id al-Saghir*, which de Sosa refers to using the Turkish term *Şeker Bayram*), the “Great Festival” (*al-Id al-Kabir*), and the “*mawlid*,” the birthday of Muhammad. He also mentions *Laylat al-Kadr*, the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan, and the *sab’wa-isterin*, which he calls *axerim*, the fourth day before Ramadan. *Topographia*, 209–15; Hart, “Berbers of Morocco.” De Sosa relates legends, games, and other curious rites concerning the festivals and the fast, mostly giving the Muslims’ own explanations, while occasionally adding ironic comments such as: “Their marabouts give an amusing reason for this, saying that Allah wished and ordained this so that the months and dates would not complain that some were more celebratory, and thus more honored, than others.” *Topographia*, 209.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 211–12.

¹⁶⁸ Barbara Fuchs talks about its Andalusian origin, which “had become fully Spanish.” Fuchs, *Exotic Nation*, 101. She cites a Spanish account from 1612 (*Relación de la expulsión de los moriscos*), where the author Damián Fonseca talks about the local Moors playing *cañas*. *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶⁹ *Topographia*, 212.

De Sosa critically approaches Muslim and Jewish beliefs or customs, and his argumentation is that of a “sensible man” who follows logic and is not satisfied with simple religious explanations. He wants, for instance, to convince Muslims that it is not reasonable to claim Christian saints as Muslims,¹⁷⁰ because “our Lord Christ lived 621 years before Muhammad, and . . . his saintly disciples had very different lives from the Muslims.”¹⁷¹ He applies this accusation to Muslims in general, not only in Algiers but “in all of Barbary . . . Turkey, Asia, Arabia, and Persia (where the Law of Muhammad is observed and flourishes),” since there is not “a school in which some or all these sciences are taught and professed.”¹⁷²

It was de Sosa’s intention to cultivate the image of a “scholar,” a careful observer using “local” words and expressions (such as giving the names of the months in Arabic), who offers his detailed observations with “objectivity.” He claims an insider’s knowledge of the Algerian world but is basically positioned in a Christian perspective. At the same time, he distances himself from it by reinforcing his identity as a Christian, Iberian, churchman, and doctor of law. By using this method, de Sosa can be placed among a number of travelers, geographers, and *baili* of his time who tried to give reliable information regarding the “Other,” and claimed competence in another cultural code as a means of self-fashioning. But few observers of the period provided such a detailed analysis about “other” societies and paid such attention to nuances by providing explanations for a variety of foreign phenomena as he did.

* * *

Antonio de Sosa’s *Topography* offers a sensitively drawn image of Muslims and their lives—a well-constructed text that also provides a refined approach and method for investigating the culture of the “Others.” When seeking to identify the ethnic, social, and anthropological traits of his subjects, de Sosa applies analytical frames and categories with more sensitivity than they usually appeared in Christian accounts of his time. An almost “secular” vision informs de Sosa’s writing, a new sensibility that makes his work especially valuable for this study. In this sense, and

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 217–18.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 218.

¹⁷² Ibid., 223.

because of its emphasis on “human diversity,” the *Topography* is an outstanding example of an early modern “ethnographic” treatise.

In his method de Sosa partly followed the patterns of the *ars apodemica*, the methodology of travel, but he paid attention to the local people and the similarities and differences between them and vis-à-vis Christians. However, his text can also be read as a captivity narrative. The experience (and trauma) of captivity with all of its implications, such as his changed social status, the feeling of humiliation, and his sufferings during his incarceration, must have influenced the contents of his account and his literary strategies. Hatred towards his captors, and the assumption that his son had died at their hands, left their imprint on the text, as well as his general opinion of Jews, as his master was a converted Jew. However, de Sosa became familiar with the culture of an alien city and the everyday life of its inhabitants. He was a curious observer of another culture and ascribed more importance to empirical knowledge and his own interpretations than to written sources.

The above examples showed that de Sosa’s main accusations against “Algerians”—“Turks, Moors, and renegades”—focused on their senseless, illogical, and backward behavior, bound by religious prejudice. While reporting on phenomena condemned by many of his contemporaries, he attempts to evaluate them in a tone reflecting curiosity and without much bias, judgment, or blame. However, in his depiction, the Turks are still the threatening enemies of Christendom, as are the renegades who violated religious and social tenets. Renegades, therefore, weakened the Christian struggle against the Muslims and strengthened the enemy. De Sosa’s condemnations mostly echo those of the vulnerable Christians of Europe, and particularly of Spain. This is revealed in his handling of Moriscos: de Sosa considers them to be valuable people, because they were born in a “Christian land” and so are skilled and learned. But the Moriscos’ great knowledge of the Spanish lands also made them the most dangerous enemy.

When arguing against religious blindness and superstitions among Muslims, he employs references to logic and reason and provides a different kind of discussion on matters of church and belief than was customary in contemporary discourse. His critical attitude also emerges in his searching for the reasons and origin of certain phenomena. Showing unfamiliarity with Muslim aspects of culture can also be a rhetorical strategy that argues indirectly for a homogenous Christian Spain and against the accusation of the “Black Legend.”

It is also worth considering that his writing may have served the Spanish Inquisition's goal of extirpating heresy. This could help explain why de Sosa chose those cultural themes he investigated, and why he described even the smallest aspects of his topic. As opposed to the conventional wisdom—that this was the expectation and style of humanist writings, and that de Sosa thus hoped to gain authority—I suggest another reason of a strategic nature: his description of the city served military goals, as such descriptions were a frequent practice in early modern empires, and as de Sosa's letter to the king also suggests. His "ethnographic" descriptions could have served political-religious goals, either for the Inquisition or the royal court.

Even though these assumptions cannot be proven, they at least point to the complexity and richness of de Sosa's text. Its main strength, in my view, is the portrayal of intra-Muslim relations, tensions, and inequality among the members of a Muslim society on the basis of "ethnic" diversity. Thus his account is a significant example of early modern writings that developed new concepts and methods in their scientific inquiries and and as such it featured a new approach: examining subjects from a more "secular" perspective that translated into "ethnic" categorizations.

The Ragusan Image of Venice and the Venetian Image of Ragusa in the Early Modern Period¹

LOVRO KUNČEVIĆ

Introduction: The Two Republics

The goal of this study is to reconstruct the images that the Republics of Venice and Ragusa created of each other during the early modern period. By using rich historiographical, literary, and diplomatic material, it investigates the mutual stereotyping of these two Adriatic cities between the late fifteenth and mid-seventeenth century.² However, this is a somewhat atypical study of the image of the Other, for two main reasons. First, it ana-

¹ This is a modified English version of the article originally published in Croatian as "Dubrovačka slika Venecije i venecijanska slika Dubrovnika u ranom novom vijeku," *Anali zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 50 (2012): 9–37.

² This topic has been largely neglected, with the notable exception of a short but valuable study by Miljenko Foretić, "Venecija u zrcalu starog Dubrovnika" [Venice in the mirror of old Ragusa], in *Dubrovnik u povijesnim i kulturnim mijenama: zbornik odabranih radova*, ed. Anica Kisić (Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 321–28. An insightful study of a related issue is Zdenka Janeković-Römer, "Ragusan Views of Venetian Rule (1205–1358)," in *Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo / Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaraum und Venedig (13.–18. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Jens Schmitt (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 53–76. An analysis of the image of Ragusa in the works of several Venetian travel writers can be found in Smiljka Malinar, "Opis Dubrovnika u izvještajima talijanskih putnika petnaestoga i šesnaestoga stoljeća" [The description of Ragusa in the reports of Italian travelers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], in *Hodočasnici, pjesnici, hvastavci: hrvatsko-talijanske studije* (Zagreb: Konzor, 2008), 5–58. For the image of Venice in the broader Dalmatian context, see Mirko Deanović, "Mleci u hrvatskoj i srpskoj književnosti: prilog povijesti jednog motiva" [Venice in Croatian and Serbian literature: A contribution to the history of one motif], *Filologija* 2 (1959): 121–36; Ljerka Schiffler, "Venezia: mito e antimito nelle opera di Francesco Patrizi da Cherso (Frane Petrić), Niccolò Vito di Gozze (Nikola V. Gučetić) e Matteo Ferchio (Marija Frkić)," in *Mito e antimito di Venezia nel bacino adriatico (secoli XV-XIX)*, ed. Sante Graciotti (Rome: Il Calamo, 2001), 77–95.

lyzes not only the stereotypes that one community created about another but also the stereotypes that that other community created about the first. Thus it will reconstruct a kind of dialogue between the two images of the Other, an interaction between the stereotypes through which the two neighboring republics described one another. The second distinctive feature of this study is that the Other in question was not culturally alien and unknown, but familiar, even remarkably similar. It was exactly such familiarity between Venice and Ragusa, the fact that their inhabitants interacted intensively for centuries, that led to the creation of elaborate and deeply rooted mutual stereotypes. What helped create and maintain these vivid images was the fact that the relations between the two republics were usually tense and even outright hostile. Although they never engaged in open warfare, for centuries they remained uneasy neighbors and fierce economic competitors, whose relationship was at best one of profound distrust and false courtesy.³

The strong cultural and political similarities between the two republics stemmed largely from the fact that during the Middle Ages, Ragusa spent a significant amount of time under Venetian sovereignty. The final and longest period of Venetian rule began in the early thirteenth century and lasted until the mid-fourteenth century, when it was ended by a momentous event. In 1358, after a crushing military defeat, the Serenissima had to cede the city, along with the rest of Dalmatia, to the victorious Hungarian king Louis of Anjou. Ragusa managed to achieve a highly privileged posi-

³ The basic overviews of Venetian-Ragusan relationship in this period are Šime Ljubić, "O odnošajih medju republikom Mletačkom i Dubrovačkom: od početka XVI. stoljeća do njihove propasti" [On the relations between the Republics of Venice and Ragusa from the sixteenth century until their fall], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, vol. 53 (1880): 94–185; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808* [The history of Ragusa until the year 1808], vol. 1 (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1980), 242–49; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808* [The history of Ragusa until the year 1808], vol. 2 (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1980), 79–91; 95–102. Good English-language summaries of the Venetian rule of Ragusa (1205–1358) and their relationship in the later period are Janeković-Römer, "Ragusan Views of Venetian Rule (1205–1358)," 53–58; 67–76; Harris Robin, *Dubrovnik: A History* (London: SAQI, 2003), 101–22, especially 117–22. The economic, cultural, and social ties between the two republics have been elucidated in Bariša Krekić, *Unequal Rivals: Essays on Relations between Dubrovnik and Venice in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: HAZU, 2007); Lovorka Čoralić, "Dubrovčani u Veneciji od XIII. do XVIII. stoljeća" [Ragusans in Venice from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century], *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 32 (1994): 15–57.

tion under its new and conveniently distant Hungarian sovereign, soon turning into a serious economic competitor of its former ruler. The relations between the two republics were further complicated after Venice reconquered all the neighboring coastal areas in the fifteenth century, leaving Ragusa as the sole Dalmatian city outside of its power. Despite Venetian pressure, the smaller republic managed to survive by relying on Hungarian and, especially, Ottoman protection, maintaining its independence until the early nineteenth century, when it was abolished by Napoleon.

Within this broad geopolitical framework, the two Adriatic cities shared an uneasy coexistence marked by constant tensions and conflicts. The main reason for this tension was their economic competition, especially in the lucrative trade with the Ottoman Empire. The struggle for positions in the mediation between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe resulted in endless conflicts regarding trading rights, customs rates, and shipping in the Adriatic. This fundamental economic tension was further exacerbated by numerous political issues. They ranged from the usual neighborly disputes about territories and the recurring quarrels regarding the right to maintain armed ships in the Adriatic, all the way to scandals caused by Ragusa's cooperation with the Ottomans, especially its espionage for the Porte. Due to the Ragusans' habit of appealing to their protectors, usually the pope or the sultan, these conflicts frequently attracted disproportionate publicity, becoming common knowledge in European diplomatic circles and leading to genuine propaganda wars between the two republics. It should be stressed, however, that in this relationship there was a kind of asymmetry that corresponded to the asymmetry in the actual power of these two states. While for Venice the smaller republic represented a relatively minor irritation, from the Ragusan perspective the Serenissima often appeared to be the most important foreign factor and a threat even greater than the neighboring Ottoman superpower.

The Ragusan Image of Venice: Demonization and Idealization

The main traits of the Ragusan image of Venice can be clearly discerned from the well-known medieval legend about the adoption of St. Blaise as the city's patron. According to the Ragusan chroniclers, in the late tenth century a Venetian fleet anchored near the city; it claimed to be headed for the Levant, but its secret goal was actually to conquer Ragusa. Although

they were received warmly as friends, each night the Venetians attempted to sneak across the city walls. However, they were repeatedly thwarted by an army in white, led by an old, bearded man. After two weeks of such nightly sieges, the old man appeared in front of a pious Ragusan priest, introducing himself as St. Blaise and urging him to inform the patrician rulers about the situation. After finding out what was happening, Ragusans grabbed their weapons and defeated the Venetians. Out of gratitude, they chose St. Blaise as their patron saint.⁴

Crucial for the city's identity, this legend—created in the fifteenth century, if not earlier—reveals the basic conventions that were to shape the images of Venice in Ragusan culture. In the story about the Venetians who betray hospitality and attack a sleeping city out of a lust for power, one can discern two main characteristics that Ragusan authors regularly attributed to their neighbors. The first was an obsessive desire to conquer or destroy Ragusa, which allegedly had been one of the main goals of Venetian politics for centuries. The second characteristic was their slyness, since, despite their military might, the Venetians were seen as cowards who preferred to achieve their goals through trickery instead of honorable open combat.

The first basic stereotype about the Venetians—their alleged obsession with conquering or destroying Ragusa—was a frequent motif in the diplomacy of the smaller republic. During the numerous diplomatic quarrels between the two cities, Ragusans routinely told other rulers, usually the pope or the sultan, that the Venetians' real goal in any given situation was to conquer Ragusa. Occasionally there was some truth to such claims, but undoubtedly the Ragusans often exaggerated, since such demonization of Venice suited their purposes. For example, Ragusan diplomats insisted on interpreting the crisis around Lastovo in the early 1600s—when that island switched allegiance to Venice and received a Venetian garrison—as a rehearsal for the occupation of the entire Republic of Ragusa. Before the

⁴ The oldest version of this story is found in the late fifteenth-century anonymous *Annals: Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. Natko Nodilo (Zagabriae: JAZU, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium 14, 1883), 20–22. The legend is also repeated by Ragusan chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, for instance, *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 199–201 (N. Ragnina); Serafino Razzi, *La storia di Raugia* (Lucca: Per Vicentio Busdraghi, 1595), 20–21; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (ab origine urbis usque ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae (1451–1484)*, ed. Natko Nodilo (Zagabriae: JAZU, Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium 25, 1893), 28–30.

pope, they proclaimed that Venetians took that island "in order to test the commitment of protectors" of Ragusa, such as Spain or the papacy, and if the reaction were weak or nonexistent, they "might also attempt to conquer the rest of our state."⁵ An even more obvious example of such diplomatic overstatement is found in the instructions to the Ragusan ambassador to Istanbul in 1631. He was told to complain about Venetian claims regarding another island, Lokrum, in the following way: "you must exaggerate as much as you can, [claiming] that this city and state are continuously tortured by the Venetians in different ways and to such an extent that they will completely destroy and finally also conquer us. . ."⁶

However, the clearest example of such diplomatic exaggerations is doubtlessly the rhetoric of Frano Gondola (Gundulić), Ragusan ambassador in Rome during the War of Cyprus (1570–1573). In this turbulent period, Gondola constantly struggled with the Venetian diplomats who were trying to persuade their allies, Spain and the papacy, to conquer the neutral Ragusa, or at least to force it to join the Christian League against the Ottomans. In one of his orations, in May 1570, Gondola warned Pope Pius V about the "evil intentions" of the Venetians and claimed that they treated Ragusans "like the worst of enemies." Gondola implored the pontiff to ignore "the falsest rumors" with which the Venetians were seeking to discredit the city. He stressed that the Ragusans had always helped the Venetians, "although they returned [this] only with evil, constantly treating us, both with words and deeds, not as good and loyal friends, but as their principal enemies." Finally, Gondola claimed that on many occasions when Ragusans aided the Christian rulers, the Venetians informed the Ottomans, hoping that the sultan "will throw in slavery these fifty or sixty thousand Christian souls."⁷

⁵ Jovan Radonić, ed., *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, vol. 3, part 1 (Ragusan Acts and Charters) (Belgrade: SKA, 1939), 104. The "Lastovo crisis" began with the rebellion of the islanders and their surrender to Venice in 1602, followed by a short restoration of Ragusan rule and then reestablishment of Venetian control in 1603. From the beginning of the crisis, a genuine propaganda war raged between the two republics in the European courts, ending only in 1606 with the restitution of the island to Ragusa. A good English summary is Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History* (London: SAQI, 2003), 118–19.

⁶ Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, vol. 3, part 1, 355. For similar rhetoric during the same crisis, see also *ibid.*, 349, 354.

⁷ Lujo Vojnović, "Depeschen des Francesco Gondola, Gesandten der Republik Ragusa bei Pius V und Gregor XIII (1570–1573)," *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 98 (1909): 570–71.

All these exaggerations of diplomats quickly pale, however, when compared to the demonization of Venice in Ragusan historiography. Some Ragusan chroniclers even offered a peculiar, pseudo-historical explanation for the supposed Venetian obsession with their city, claiming that it originated from an alleged conflict between Venice and Byzantium in the late tenth century. Soon after the aforementioned episode with St. Blaise, the Venetians supposedly attacked the Aegean territories of Byzantium, which prompted the emperor to send an envoy to Ragusa, asking for an alliance. The envoy had brought the emperor's letter, which the chroniclers "quoted" in order to better illustrate this obviously invented story and to further defame the Venetians. To be more convincing, the anonymous author of the influential *Annals* even switched from Italian to Latin, attributing to the emperor the following, somewhat confused, description of the common enemy:

Malicious Venetians have gone savage due to their injustice, nastiness, and maliciousness, and they always had the evil intention of attacking and destroying [you Ragusans] with their perversity. Obsessed by evil . . . due to their malicious nastiness, they constantly seek your destruction.⁸

Roughly a century later, in the 1590s, another chronicler, Serafino Razzi, presented his version of the emperor's letter. In this version, although somewhat more restrained and articulate, the emperor described the Venetians in a similar way:

After having considered the enormous greed, the enormous lust for power and possessions of that nation . . . which has acquired all that it possesses through deceit and plunder and, not content with what it unjustly gained, continues further, it seems, to seek the augmentation of its power by penetrating into our lands and our seas. . .⁹

⁸ The editor of the *Annals*, N. Nodilo, stressed that there are significant differences in the text of this letter between the various versions of the *Annals* (*Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 24). For a very similar story in the sixteenth-century annals of N. Ragnina, see *ibid.*, 203–5; for a similar text of the emperor's letter, see *ibid.*, 203.

⁹ Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 22.

The Ragusan chroniclers continued by stressing that the alliance with Byzantium was then made, and the imperial fleet sailed deep into the Adriatic with Ragusan aid. This led the Venetians—who, typically, lacked the courage to fight—to sue for peace. Byzantium was appeased, while Venice had to pay Ragusa 12,000 ducats as compensation for certain unjustly confiscated trade goods. Only after this complex narration came the true point of the whole story, however—the explanation of the epic Venetian hatred for Ragusa. A typical example is found in the chronicle of Nikša Ragnina (Ranjina) from the first half of the sixteenth century:

From that moment the Venetians began to treat the Ragusans as their greatest enemies [*capitali nemici*], not missing a single opportunity to harm them. And it seems that in their councils, they made a certain law that every Friday they would debate [about] the destruction and ruin of the Ragusans, because they were the reason why the imperial fleet had entered the Adriatic against them.¹⁰

This legend about a law ordering the Venetian councils to debate the destruction of Ragusa on a weekly basis was also mentioned by some versions of the anonymous *Annals* and the early eighteenth-century chronicle of Junius Resti.¹¹ An unpublished version of the *Annals*, probably from the early sixteenth century, gave a more detailed account of the wicked deeds about which the Venetians decided to debate, mentioning the conquest of Ragusa by force or trickery, various economic reprisals, and confiscation of merchandise. The author stressed that the Venetians “have therefore for many years stolen enormous sums from Ragusans and are still stealing them today,” and then, obviously genuinely angry, he added: “The devil take them!” (*Diavolo li porti*).¹²

¹⁰ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, 35; State Archives of Dubrovnik (hereinafter: SAD), *Memoriae* 18, “Origine della Città di Ragusa estratta da certe scritture antichissime con aggiunta di alcun cose più memorabili costumate in Ragusa, 1507, l. Giorigi ab M.,” 49–50. Interestingly enough, although Razzi presents the entire story of the Venetian-Byzantine conflict, he does not mention the alleged decision of the Venetians to regularly debate the destruction of Ragusa. As a foreigner and, moreover, an Italian, he might have found that conclusion to the legend to be too anti-Venetian.

¹² SAD, *Memoriae* 24, “Dell origine della citta di Ragusa. Ms.,” f. 10r. After the story about the capitulation of Venice, the text runs as follows: “Et allora li Veneziani cominciarono molto più inimicarsi con li Ragusei, et pensar la ruina della città, e fecero legge di far

Ragusan Renaissance historiography interpreted the Venetian attitude towards Ragusa completely along the lines sketched in this legend. The Venetians remained the arch-villains of the city's history, with an inexorable hatred that was revealed again and again through numerous historical episodes. To begin with, besides the legendary story about the adoption of St. Blaise, the chroniclers mentioned several other instances—usually invented or at least historically dubious—when the Venetians tried to conquer Ragusa. For example, in the twelfth century, Archbishop Leonard, a Venetian, was expelled from the city since he supposedly tried to help hand control of it over to the Venetian fleet that was passing by on its way to the Levant.¹³ In the late fifteenth century, the Venetians allegedly offered the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus, a huge sum of money to help them conquer the city. In a devious plot, they suggested that the king put his trusted men among the mercenaries whom the Ragusans traditionally hired in his lands, so that at an opportune moment, they could secretly open the city's gates.¹⁴ The Venetians applied an equally sly tactic in 1538, during the War of the Holy League with the Ottomans. Their diplomats first tried to persuade the Christian allies to conquer Ragusa and, when that failed, they slandered it so nastily that "all the Christians began to think badly of them and stopped trusting them."¹⁵ According to the Ragusan authors, the Venetians also revealed their enormous hatred for Ragusa on those rare occasions when they actually managed to conquer the city. Describing a period of Venetian rule in the twelfth century, the anonymous annalist writes that the Venetian governors lived "tyrannically," while their soldiers "raped women, stole, and fought," all "with the consent of the governor."¹⁶

ogni venerdì consiglio per pigliar per forza, o per inganno la città de Ragusii, et pigliar repressaglie in Venetia et fora spoliare le nave, barche de ogni mercantia salvo grano et sal era libera, dove in molti anni hanno robato gran tesoro agli Ragusei, et robanno fino oggi di. Diavolo li porti." The same text is repeated in the two other manuscripts of the Ragusan annals, one kept in the National and University Library in Zagreb (hereinafter: NSK) and the other in the State Archives of Ragusa (NSK, R 3544 "Cronaca di Ragusa (825–1715).," f. 56v; SAD, *Memoriae* 32 "Trattato. Origine di Ragusa. Saec 16. ms., f. 15r).

¹³ SAD, *Memoriae*, 18 "Origine della Città di Ragusa," 173; *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 219 (Ragnina).

¹⁴ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 77.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 288–89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29, 31. A similar description is found in Ragnina's text: *ibid.*, 214–15. For a more detailed analysis, see Janeković-Römer, "Ragusan Views of Venetian Rule (1205–1358)," 64–66.

Besides these drastic examples of Venetian malice, Ragusan chroniclers also narrated numerous other episodes when the Venetians had tried to harm the city. For instance, in the eleventh century, they allegedly planned to construct a fort next to the city, but the Ragusans managed to thwart their plan by rapidly constructing the fortress of Lovrijenac on that same spot.¹⁷ Venetian slyness was also mentioned as a reason why Ragusa had lost a piece of the Holy Cross that was pawned in Venice. The Ragusan envoys, bringing the money required to redeem the relic, allegedly arrived the day before the deadline. However, the Venetians made the church bells ring the *Ave Maria* at noon, thus marking the beginning of the new day and refusing to return the relic.¹⁸ Finally, the impressive list of Venetian malfeasance in Ragusan historiography included endless laments about the more day-to-day problems between the two economic rivals, such as harassments of Ragusan ships, confiscations of trade goods, or charging huge customs fees.¹⁹

Most of the examples listed above also reveal the other basic characteristic attributed to the Venetians in the Ragusan tradition: they were depicted as cowards who avoided direct conflict, achieving their goals through cunning and deceit. They crawled over the Ragusan walls at night, incited their Christian allies against the city, plotted with its treacherous archbishop, tried to set up fake mercenaries, and misinterpreted the clear deals regarding pawning. Venetian cowardice, even effeminacy, was an absolute commonplace of Ragusan Renaissance historiography and literature. In a satirical poem, the influential sixteenth-century poet Mavro Vetranović described how the Venetians “at once get disoriented and lost” when they see the Ottomans. He continued by ironically advising them to devote themselves to fishing instead of fighting, since “the entire world knows that arms are not for you,” but the “women’s spindle.”²⁰ The sixteenth-century historian Tubero ridiculed them in a similar way, writing that the “Venetian

¹⁷ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 28, 212; Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 31.

¹⁸ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 42. A similar story is also found in Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 43.

¹⁹ Some typical examples from the anonymous annals and Ragnina’s chronicle are *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 88, 94–95, 273, 298, 299–300.

²⁰ Vatroslav Jagić and Ivan A. Kaznačić, eds., *Pjesme Mavra Vetranovića Čavčića* [The poems of Mavro Vetranović Čavčić], part 1, *Stari pisci Hrvatski* 3 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1871), 215–16. For this satire, see also Vinko Foretić, “Politički pogledi Mavra Vetranovića” [The political views of Mavro Vetranović], *Filologija* 10 (1980–1981): 291–301.

in a military outfit is funny even to his own soldiers and how much more to his enemies." At another place, Tubero again played on the stereotype of Venetian effeminacy, writing that a certain commander was captured by the Ottomans and taken away "like a woman who had taken up arms."²¹ The motif of Venetian cowardice is also clearly present in the anonymous *Annals*, which make it clear that in the two crucial historical situations when the enemy fleet entered the Adriatic, the Venetians did not dare to face an open battle. According to the aforementioned legend, in the late tenth century they capitulated to the Byzantine fleet, while in the late fourteenth century, facing the Genoese navy, they "did not have the courage" for direct confrontation, accepting it only after the enemy "forced them to fight."²²

However, this fear of direct confrontation makes the Venetians especially dangerous, since they achieve their goals through unscrupulous intrigues. The aforementioned remark from Razzi's chronicle that Venice "has acquired all that it possesses through deceit" summarizes the Ragusan understanding of Venetian political methods. To describe their cunning, the poet Vetranović even used a peculiar verb derived from the noun "fox" and wrote about Venetian "foxing" (*lisičenje*).²³ However, their utter absence of scruples in the pursuit of power was most clearly articulated in a passage by Tubero:

And, truly, those who know well the nature of that people testify that among them, the one who during the council's meetings expounds about villainies—if they are required by the great utility that would follow—is considered great, wise and loyal to the Republic.²⁴

Besides endlessly lamenting the injustices committed by the Venetians against their city, Ragusan authors spoke about the character of their rivals in yet another way. They wrote about Venetian rule in neighboring Dalmatia, comparing it—of course, unfavorably—with the rule of the Ragusan

²¹ Ludovik Crijević Tuberon, *Komentari o mojem vremenu* [Comments on my era] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001), 170. Similar examples are also found in *ibid.*, 140–44, 147.

²² *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 42–43.

²³ Luko Paljetak, Dunja Fališevac, and Miljenko Foretić, eds., *Sveti Vlaho: dubrovački parac u hrvatskoj književnosti* [Saint Blaise: The Ragusan patron in Croatian literature] (Dubrovnik: Matica Hrvatska, 2001), 16–17.

²⁴ Tuberon, *Komentari*, 196.

patriciate. Although the implicit comparisons can be found in sixteenth-century literature and historiography, it was in the first half of the seventeenth century that two quite elaborate and articulate ones emerged.²⁵ The first is found in a satirical poem written in 1618 by the Ragusan Pasko Primi (Primović) about the neighboring island of Korčula, a Venetian possession. Comparing life under the rule of Venice with that in Ragusa, Primi insists on one fundamental difference: Ragusans live in freedom, while Korčula is under a tyrannical foreign rule. More precisely, Ragusans are free, having lords who “are kind and gentle in everything,” and are thus enjoying life “as if in heaven,” while “the widows and the poor women live honorably.” However, the violent Venetian rule is the exact opposite of the Ragusan idyll. The Dalmatians are “slaves” (*schiavi*); their “sisters, daughters, and wives” suffer “under the force” of the Venetian officials; their houses are defiled, and they do not even dare “to speak up.”²⁶ A similar contrast between the rule of the two republics appears in the famous pastoral play *Dubravka*, written by the Ragusan patrician Ivan Gondola (Gundulić) in the mid-1620s. In order to deliver his ideological message, Gondola used a monologue by an old fisherman who had fled to Ragusa from Dalmatia. The Dalmatian refugee evoked the basic contrast between slavery and liberty by proclaiming: “Our coast has been reduced to nothing by force / while this Dubrava [Ragusa] is ruled by itself.” This idea was further elaborated in the monologue by an insistence on the violence and arbitrariness of Venetian rule. As the fisherman stated, in Dalmatia “the ferocious beast” holds everything “in its claws” to such an extent that “you cannot call a wife, children, or possessions your own,” while in Ragusa “each is a master of himself and of all he owns.” Governance in Dalmatia is not only violent and arbitrary but also deeply corrupt. In Dalmatia money is the “reason, justice, and measure of everything,” and for it one sells “faith, life . . . soul and honor,” while in Ragusa “one does not follow the pay / nor are the scales at the court weighted down by gold.”²⁷

²⁵ Such contrasts can be found in the works of the Renaissance vernacular poets such as Džore Držić or Hanibal Lučić. Lovro Kunčević, “On Ragusan *Libertas* in the Late Middle Ages,” *Dubrovnik Annals* 14 (2010): 67.

²⁶ Fran Kurelac, ed., *Runje i pahuljice pjesni podrugljive i pastirske ponajveć dubrovačke* [Rags and snowflakes: Satirical and pastoral poems, mostly from Ragusa] (Zagreb: Dragutin. Albrecht, 1866–1868), 63.

²⁷ Although, of course, the central theme of *Dubravka* was exactly the failed attempt to change this and to corrupt Ragusa. For the quotations, see Ivan Gundulić, *Suze sina razmetnoga. Dubravka. Ferdinandu Drugomu od Toskane* [Tears of the prodigal son: Dubravka; To Ferdinand II of Tuscany] (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1964), 90–91.

These descriptions of the Serenissima's rule reveal the already familiar image of the Venetians, but with some new features, because the Ragusan rivals here emerge in the role of rulers. Their transformation is quite intriguing, since they, to use the Machiavellian vocabulary, turn from "foxes" to "lions." According to Ragusan tradition, before they acquire power, the Venetians avoid direct confrontation, using deceit and trickery to achieve their goals. Once they gain power, however, they begin acting extremely violently, establishing a form of dominion in which the lives, possessions, and especially the wives of their subjects are in constant danger.²⁸

Thus diplomats, literati, and historians of early modern Ragusa created an image of the Venetians as sly plotters preying on their city for centuries, attempting to destroy or subject it to their despotic rule. What is truly intriguing is that this image not only was common in elite culture but also, apparently, shaped the everyday life of the city, influencing the behavior of its government and the population at large. At the most general level, it contributed to the deep animosity towards the Venetians that seems to have been typical of many early modern Ragusans. Numerous travel writers, especially from the seventeenth century, mention the fierce "hatred" and "envy" that characterized the relations between these two republics, as well as the fact that "they do not omit a single opportunity to cause trouble for each other."²⁹ In the mid-eighteenth century, Alexandre André Le Maire, the French consul in Ragusa, stated that "there is no greater antipathy than the one ruling between these two nations." Elsewhere he was even more explicit:

These [Ragusan] noblemen are constantly feeding their hatred of the Venetians. It is a matter of written compositions and declamations of pupils already in the collegiums. The uneducated and primitive

²⁸ In Ragusan historiography, Venetian sovereignty over the city during the Middle Ages was described along the same lines: Janeković-Römer, "Ragusan Views of Venetian Rule (1205–1358)," *passim*, especially 64–66. However, besides insisting on the brutality of Venetian rule, Ragusan historians also displayed a contradictory tendency of trying to trivialize Venetian power in order to claim that Ragusa was actually independent even under the rule of the *Serenissima*.

²⁹ The quote is from a travelogue by the French writer Du Loir published in 1654: Jorjo Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku* [The traffic of travelers in old Ragusa] (Dubrovnik, 1939), 268. For another similar example, see *ibid.*, 275.

people share the feelings of their masters and get so enraged that it is sometimes hard to control their fierceness.³⁰

Besides feeding such general antagonism, the deeply rooted belief about the worst intentions of the Venetians influenced the behavior of the Ragusan authorities and population in yet another way. This was shown on occasions when the Venetian fleet was passing by the city or even anchoring in the neighboring bay of Gruž. In those moments the atmosphere in the city got extremely tense, even panicky, and wild rumors began to circulate. For instance, the anonymous *Annals* describe a situation in 1545 when there was "great fear" in the city, because there was a conflagration while ten Venetian galleys were nearby. A rumor started that the fire was set to cause chaos so that the Venetians could attack during the night.³¹ The enormous anxiety caused by the presence of the Venetian fleet can also be clearly discerned from an incident that took place in 1596. As was often the case, while the fleet anchored in the vicinity, some of the Venetian crews disembarked in Ragusa. In a plot reminiscent of a Renaissance comedy, one Venetian nobleman, looking for a certain courtesan, entered the wrong door. Although he immediately apologized, he heard female screams "in the Slavic language" and was attacked by those inside. This minor incident apparently sparked full-scale chaos: the city gates were closed, alarm bells rang, and men armed themselves and ran onto the streets, while everywhere the stunned Venetians were beaten and taken to prison. The result was one Venetian nobleman murdered, another wounded, and a diplomatic scandal in which Ragusa had to apologize, albeit reluctantly, for overreacting.³²

³⁰ For these quotes, see Alexandre André Le Maire, "O Dubrovniku i Dubrovčanima 1766" [On Ragusa and Ragusans in 1766], trans. Zdravko Šundrica, *Dubrovnik* 3 (1974): 25–26; 35–36.

³¹ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 109–10. For similar examples of unease in the city and panicky rumors due to the presence of the Venetian fleet, see *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, 135; Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa*, 80, 106; Vjekoslav Jelavić, "Iz prepiske Nikole Bourdina, franceskoga residenta u Dubrovniku" [From the correspondence of Nicolas Bourdin, the French resident in Ragusa], *Starine JAZU* 34 (1913): 28–30.

³² This version of the events should be taken with a grain of salt, however, since it comes from the pen of a Venetian and is directed to the Venetian authorities. A nineteenth-century copy of this report, made on the basis of a manuscript kept in the Vatican, is found in the Scientific Library in Dubrovnik (*Znanstvena knjižnica*

Such reaction probably came as no surprise to the Venetians, since they were familiar with the profound Ragusan distrust towards them. In fact, perhaps the clearest articulation of this distrust is found in a report of a Venetian spy from Ragusa, written in 1612:

They [Ragusans] are firmly convinced that the galleys that often come to Ragusa have the goal of conquering them whenever the opportunity arises, which is allegedly expected from the conflicts and civil strife that abound in the city. They believe that these conflicts are supported by the servants of your Serenity so that, due to the civil strife, it would be easier to suddenly take away their liberty. . .³³

Of course, it is prudent for a city to take precautionary measures when a foreign fleet is nearby. However, as the Venetian documents reveal, Ragusan fears were quite excessive. Beyond any doubt, the most frequently issued command to the Venetian captains regarding the Ragusans was that they should be treated “well and with friendliness” or “knowing the best intentions and the good disposition of our *Signoria*.”³⁴ Further evidence of excessive Ragusan fear appears in the orders given to the Venetian commanders in the case of civil strife in Ragusa. In the instructions issued in 1623 to the newly elected governor-general of Dalmatia, the supreme civil and military magistrate, there is mention of the possible conflict between the Ragusan noblemen and the *popolo*. It is stressed that Venice’s interest requires that “this city should be preserved in peace in whatever way,” so that in the case of civil unrest, the governor-general is ordered to “stay away” and even prevent foreign intervention.³⁵ A similar instruction was issued in 1628, also mentioning “the conflicts in Ragusa, which are always troubling for us,” with explicit orders to the governor-

Dubrovnik): Rkp. 592 RAGUSA, “Narratione del Tumulto de Ragusci Contra le Galere Venetiane Di Galera dal Porto di Sta Croce di Ragusci il 5 febbraio 1596,” f. 12r–16r. The letter in which the Ragusans apologized to Venice—while, however, narrating a completely different version of events—is published in Vikentij Makušev and Milan Šufflay, eds., “Isprave za odnošaj Dubrovnika prema Veneciji” [Documents regarding the Ragusan relationship towards Venice], *Starine JAZU* 31 (1905): 133–34.

³³ The document is quoted in Ljubić, “O odnošajih,” 150.

³⁴ Many examples from the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century are found in Makušev and Šufflay, eds., “Isprave za odnošaj Dubrovnika prema Veneciji,” 65, 83, 85, 86–87, 122–23, 198, 226–27, 257.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

general not to interfere and, again, to prevent any foreign intervention.³⁶ As opposed to the fears expressed by the Ragusans, the Venetian officials were often ordered not only to abstain from intervening in the city, but even to *defend* its independence from others. Of course, this was due not to altruism but to the fear that if Ragusa became unstable, the instability might spread to nearby Venetian possessions. Nonetheless, it is telling that the Venetian officials were ordered not to intervene precisely in the situations when such an intervention would have been the easiest to accomplish and justify.

Yet Venice was not always a benevolent neighbor. At times when relations between the two republics were poor, the Serenissima did not hesitate to use its military superiority both brutally and cynically. For instance, in 1569 and 1570, the Venetian captains were ordered to capture and plunder Ragusan ships whenever they could. The captain general was even told to go to the waters around the city and systematically confiscate all the ships but to release a few so the Ragusans could not say they were "under siege."³⁷ During another crisis, in 1617, the captain general was ordered to let the mercenaries in his service "inflict every conceivable damage" on the Ragusan possessions. They were expected to seize the foodstuffs, destroy the properties, demolish the vineyards, and even "smash the city's aqueduct." All of that was to take place in his absence, so that he could later apologize and plead ignorance.³⁸ It seems that on several occasions, the Venetian senate even debated whether to conquer Ragusa, although it was discussed only in vague and general terms. During the aforementioned crisis regarding the island of Lastovo in the early 1600s, one senator warned in his oration that Ragusa was not ruled as wisely as it once was. He continued by pointing out that a certain "change" (*mutazione*) or "ruin" (*rovina*) might happen in that city, and in that case:

Due to reasons of state and our preservation, since the city of the Ragusans is in the region of Dalmatia, which is partially under our rule, we have to take possession and rights over it, as the most powerful neighbors, and not allow another ruler or prince to conquer it,

³⁶ Ibid., 248.

³⁷ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereinafter: ASV), CX, *Secreta*, reg IX: f. 26v–27r, 64v, 94v, 122v.

³⁸ Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, part 2, 88.

since it would be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to remove him from there later.³⁹

However, this was just the digression of one senator. When the relations between the two Adriatic republics are considered in their entirety, one gets the impression that the acquisition of Ragusa, albeit desirable, was never a top priority of Venetian politics. Seen from the lagoons, the smaller republic was a constant irritation, especially as an economic competitor, but attacking it directly never seemed worth potentially provoking a serious international crisis. This unease regarding Ragusa's powerful patrons is discernible in yet another oration delivered during the Lastovo crisis. The anonymous speaker—most likely in front of the senate or *collegio*—warned that it would be perilous to defend that island with the army, since that would mean risking the intervention of Ragusa's protectors, the Ottomans or the Spanish.⁴⁰ In sum, although the Venetian elite was far from benevolent towards Ragusa, it usually had more important things to do than plot Ragusa's downfall. Therefore, the traditional Ragusan image of Venice seems to have been not only slightly paranoid but also quite narcissistic.

Moreover, this image was also extremely useful to the Ragusan patriate. Although it was doubtlessly created and maintained spontaneously as a result of constant tensions between the two republics, this image of Venice was also skillfully used by the Ragusan elite for at least two important political purposes. First, the claim that the Venetians were tirelessly

³⁹ The oration has been preserved in a codex containing miscellaneous documents in Museo Correr, Venice, *Provenienze Diverse*, 398c, fasc. 8, "Sulla cessione di un Porto da parte della Repubblica di Venezia a Ragusa," no pagination. Due to its interesting rhetoric, a long passage should be quoted: ". . . quanto minor forza haverà alcun stato, tanto più facile sia la mutatione di esso per il che per ogni ragione dobbiamo credere, et aspettare che avvenga della Rep. de Ragusei, non essendo essa più governata, con quella sincerità de leggi et de statuti, con quali prima governarsi soleva, essendo mancata nei suoi senatori la prudenza, et all'incontro subintrata l'ambitione, et l'avaritia principali capi, et fonti di ogni rovina, il che se mai avvenisse, comme avvenir potrebbe, dobbiamo noi per ragion di stato, et per conservatione nostra, essendo la città de Ragusei nel continente di Dalmatia in parte à noi soggetta, come potissimi confinanti subintrare nel possesso, et ragione di essa, ne permetter ch'altro Signore ò altro Prencipe s'impatronisca onde il discacciarlo poi sia cosa difficile, et forse anco impossibile."

⁴⁰ The oration is preserved in Museo Correr, Venice, *Codice Cicogna* 2534, number 87, "Arringa intorno alla difesa degli Lagustani contra quei di Ragusa."

plotting against Ragusa had an important function in the city's diplomacy. Second, it was significant in the city's internal affairs as an effective means of ensuring social peace and the legitimacy of aristocratic rule.

The importance of this image in Ragusan diplomacy has already been addressed: the "predatory" image of Venice was extremely useful during the endless diplomatic clashes between the two republics. Due to the Ragusan practice of involving the city's protectors in these conflicts, they usually took place at the courts of other rulers, especially in Rome or at the Porte. They consisted largely of attempts to defame the other republic, with arguments that were usually the same on both sides. While the Venetians claimed that the Ragusans were selfish profiteers who opportunistically cooperated with the Ottomans or Christians (depending on the audience), Ragusans insisted that the Venetians were in fact secretly trying to conquer their city. What made Ragusan accusations more persuasive was the fact that they rested on the powerful anti-myth of Venice, the international image of the Venetians as insatiable and unscrupulous conquerors.⁴¹ The way in which Ragusan diplomacy used the "predatory" image of Venice is exemplified by a nervous letter from the Venetian ambassadors in Rome, written in October 1570. Writing to the heads of the powerful Council of Ten, the ambassadors reported on an audience with Pope Pius V in which they had shown the pontiff—probably genuine—proof of Ragusan assistance to the Ottomans in the ongoing war with the Christian coalition. However, the Pope seems to have talked with the Ragusan diplomats first. Thus when the Venetian ambassadors finished their anti-Ragusan tirade, "in great anger" the Holy Father told them, "you are harassing these Ragusans and wish to destroy them," soon adding, "you desire that which belongs to others, and God will punish you."⁴² Needless to say, this was a clear echo of Ragusan rhetoric.

⁴¹ For this aspect of the Venetian anti-myth, see Nicolai Rubinstein, "Italian Reactions to *Terraferma* Expansion in the Fifteenth Century," in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. John R. Hale (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 197–217; Franco Gaeta, "Idea di Venezia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3/III, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1981), 583–91; Michael Sherman, "Political Propaganda and Renaissance Culture: French Reactions to the League of Cambrai, 1509–1510," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 8 (1977): 97–128.

⁴² "Come fu letta detta lettera disse Sua Stà con impeto di colera grande: Voi date adosso à questi Ragusei, et li volete rovinar. . . voi volete quel d'altri et Dio vi flagella, et vi castigarà anche nell'avvenir. Ragusei sono homini da bene, et vivono catholicamente, et volesse Dio, che in altri luoghi si facesse così" (ASV, CCX, *Lettere di ambasciatori Roma*, busta 25 [1566–1573], letter dated October 7, 1570).

The second purpose for which the Ragusan elite used the “predatory” image of Venice was to ensure social peace within the city itself. Namely, although Ragusan fears regarding the powerful neighbor were sometimes justified, it does seem that in many instances the ruling elite purposely created and supported the notion of a Venetian threat. The reason is simple: one of the best ways of ensuring social cohesion in a community is by creating a sense of outside threat. That the Ragusan elite was conscious of this political principle is confirmed by the philosopher Nikola Vitov Gozze (1549–1610), a member of the innermost ruling circle of the patrician class.⁴³ In his treatise *Dello Stato delle repubbliche*, Gozze stressed that Aristotle recommended fear as an excellent means of preserving the state, quoting his remark that “those who are afraid are more vigilant in guarding the state, and therefore it is a task of the rulers to create fear in order to preserve it.” The Ragusan philosopher-politician continued with an interesting explanation of what Aristotle meant by that sentence:

It is thus necessary to occasionally invoke before the citizens’ eyes the great dangers that the city is in or could end up in if they did not restrain their licentious desires or were careless and lazy in guarding it from the external or internal enemies. . .⁴⁴

There is a subtle but undeniable change in meaning here, one that reveals a great deal about how Gozze understood the political uses of fear. While Aristotle was speaking only of provoking fear in order to maintain the alertness of the citizens, Gozze took a step further. The primary reason for invoking fear was “restraining” the “licentious desires” of the population, while maintaining watchfulness was only secondary. Exactly such “restraining” of the subjects was what the Ragusan government achieved by constantly reminding the population of the threats to its freedom and welfare, threats represented primarily by the Venetians but also by the Ottomans. Such a sense of permanent danger—partially spontaneous

⁴³ Gozze was repeatedly elected to the highest offices of the Republic of Ragusa. For instance, he held the highest office of the rector no less than seven times. Marinko Šišak, “Nikola Gučetić i njegova teorija države” [Nikola Gučetić and his theory of the state], in Nikola Vitov Gučetić, *O ustroju država* (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 2000), 14.

⁴⁴ Nicolò Vito di Gozzi, *Dello stato delle repubbliche* (Venice: Aldo, 1591), 269.

and partially fabricated—significantly contributed to Ragusa's remarkable social stability.⁴⁵

Another example of what seems to have been a deliberate provocation of unease in the population was the aforementioned depictions of tyrannical Venetian rule in neighboring Dalmatia. The fisherman's monologue at the beginning of Gondola's *Dubravka*, performed in front of the entire city in 1628, must have been especially effective. However, the ideological message about the permanent Venetian threat was most clearly transmitted by the central public ceremony of Ragusa—the feast of its patron, St. Blaise. Every year on February 3, the entire community celebrated the saint who, according to tradition, became the city's patron precisely by defending it from the Venetians. This legend was undoubtedly on the minds of both the participants and the spectators of the ceremonies. It is even possible that the central event of the day, a big military parade, evoked the celestial and/or earthly army that had allegedly defended Ragusa from the Venetian assault. An even clearer message of the threat to the community was transmitted by the struggle between the "captain" and "counter-captain," two warriors in sumptuous costumes, a ritual that emerged in the seventeenth century. This staged battle finished with a telling proclamation. After the "captain's" victory, the rector of the republic was informed that all was well and that "ours have won." Of course, there was little doubt about who, in that instance, was meant by "theirs."⁴⁶

In this context, it might come as a surprise that, along with the predominant demonization of Venice, in Ragusan Renaissance culture a diametrically opposed portrayal of the Serenissima also emerged: an absolute idealization of Venice. A number of Ragusan authors repeated an important

⁴⁵ The aforementioned references in Venetian sources to the social strife in Ragusa thus come as some surprise. Perhaps they allude to the conflicts among the elite, though these also never led to open hostilities but remained confined to institutional and legal means. Some intriguing ideas, but also a lot of mistaken data and interpretations, regarding the stability of Ragusa appear in Susan Mosher Stuart, *A State of Deference: Ragusa (Dubrovnik) in the Medieval Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ For a detailed description and insightful analysis of the feast of St. Blaise, see Nella Lonza, *Kazalište vlasti, Ceremonijal i državni blagdani Dubrovačke Republike u 17. i 18. stoljeću* [The theater of power: State ceremony and feasts of the Republic of Dubrovnik in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] (Zagreb and Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti i Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2009), 358–83; for the battle of the two captains: 377–78.

topos of Renaissance republican thought, the claim that Venetian institutions represented an ideal form of the republican constitution.⁴⁷ However, in most cases such claims came with an assertion that revealed their true purpose: namely, that the Ragusan constitution was in fact strikingly similar to the Venetian one. In other words, Ragusan praise of Venice usually amounted to nothing but (badly) concealed self-glorification. Thus in his *Dello stato*, Gozze proclaimed that the Republic of Venice was “divinely constituted” and even that it was “an example of holy and divine government.” Not surprisingly, what followed afterwards was a laudation of Ragusa itself:

. . . in imitation of that most famous republic, we have maintained ourselves for nine hundred years in civil liberty and inviolable aristocratic governance, which has not suffered any modification or disorder, either due to good or bad fortune. . .⁴⁸

Flattering comparisons of the Ragusan constitution to its Venetian counterpart were also made by the historian Giacomo Luccari, who mentioned that his city was rightly considered a “small Venice,” since “our government is little different from the Venetian one.”⁴⁹ In his chronicle Serafino Razzi even offered a (pseudo-)historical explanation for the constitutional similarity of the two republics, interpreting the period of Venetian rule over Ragusa in the twelfth century as an intensive course in political practice. After allegedly inviting the Venetians of their own will, the Ragusans began receiving governors from the famous republic, “from whom they were able to learn their extraordinary manner of governing,” only to send the last one home, after some thirty years, with the remark “that they do not need them anymore since they have learned their way of governing.”⁵⁰ In espe-

⁴⁷ For the fascination with the Venetian constitution in the political thought of the early modern period, see William J. Bouwsma, “Venice and the Political Education of Europe,” in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. John R. Hale (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 445–66; Felix Gilbert, “The Venetian Constitution in Florentine Political Thought,” in *Florentine Studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein (London: Faber, 1968), 463–500; John Eglin, *The Myth of Venice in British Culture, 1660–1797* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1980).

⁴⁸ Di Gozzi, *Dello Stato*, 284.

⁴⁹ Giacomo Luccari, *Copioso ristretto degli annali di Rausa* (Venice: Ad instantia di Antonio Leonardi, 1605), 41.

⁵⁰ Razzi, *La storia di Raugia*, 33–34.

cially patriotic moments, the Ragusans even seem to have tried to invert this relationship of model and imitator. Thus several early modern travel writers mention that the Ragusan “republican form of government is older than the Venetian one.”⁵¹ Attempts to stress the similarities with Venice were sometimes so tendentious that they became counter-productive, as can be seen from the remark of one travel writer who contended that Ragusans were imitating Venetians “like monkeys.”⁵²

Obviously, such insistence on the similarity of the two political systems was an attempt to “borrow” for Ragusa some of the extraordinary prestige that Venice enjoyed as an ideal republic in the political imaginary of early modern Europe. This “parasitizing” was successful to a certain extent, since some of the most important political thinkers of the early modern period stressed the similarity of the two republics. Thus, for instance, Jean Bodin wrote that Venice served as a model for the Ragusan constitution, even pointing out that due to certain institutional details, Ragusa had a purer form of aristocratic government.⁵³ Francesco Sansovino, a Venetian, also mentioned that the Ragusans had copied the perfect government of his homeland, adding in a slightly patronizing tone that since then, Ragusa managed to “maintain itself with some reputation.”⁵⁴

The Venetian Image of Ragusa: A Parody of One's Own Greatness

The mutual images of the two Adriatic republics were characterized by a profound asymmetry. On the one hand, Ragusa was awed, even obsessed, with Venice, which was seen as a political factor of fundamental

⁵¹ Paul Ricaut, *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Charles Brome, 1686), 120. For similar remarks by other travel writers, see Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, 255, 274.

⁵² It was the French Protestant Ph. du Fresne Canaye who visited in 1572 (Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, 255).

⁵³ Jean Bodin, *De republica libri sex* (Paris: Apud Iacobvm Dv-pvys, 1586), 222.

⁵⁴ Francesco Sansovino, *Del governo dei Regni e delle Repubbliche così antiche come moderne. Libri XVIII* (Venice: Apresso Francesco Sansovino, 1561), 123. The interesting question of why Venice created an empire while Ragusa remained a small state, although both had the same political system, was addressed by the Ragusan historian J. Resti in the early eighteenth century (*Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, 37–38). For more examples of the idealization of Venice by the Ragusan authors, especially in poetry, see Foretić, “Venecija u zrcalu,” 323–25.

importance, filling a huge part of the diplomatic horizon. For this reason, the Serenissima was a frequent topic not only in Ragusa's diplomacy but also in its historiography and literature. On the other hand, for a first-rate European power such as Venice, Ragusa remained an issue of secondary importance. Therefore, the image of the smaller republic in Venetian tradition appears vague and mostly limited to the political sphere, that is, the specialized discourses of governmental institutions and the ruling elite.

The basic contours of the Venetian image of Ragusa are fairly clear. The Venetian senators, general-governors, captains, and spies almost always repeated two basic stereotypes, which also shaped the concrete politics of the Serenissima towards the smaller neighbor. The first was that Ragusa was not a truly sovereign state, a community that deserved to be called a "republic," since it was a weak city whose very survival depended on the goodwill of its powerful neighbors, including the Ottomans and the Venetians themselves. The second stereotype was that the Ragusans harbored a pathological hatred of Venice, seeking to harm it in any way they could, especially by instigating their powerful Ottoman protectors.

The first Venetian stereotype went against the central tenet of the Ragusan republican ideology—the endlessly repeated claims about the "liberty" of the city-state. How the Venetian elite saw Ragusa can be discerned quite well from one oration from 1603 held in the *collegio* regarding the problematic island of Lastovo. Arguing for returning it to Ragusa, one speaker—obviously a high official—warned that in any case, the Ragusans were "surrounded by the state of the Venetian *signori* and that on these *signori* depended their false liberty." He added that the Ragusans themselves were aware "they would be free only as long as it was useful to the Republic of Venice" and knew that their protector, the sultan, had no power on the sea to protect them from the Venetian fleet.⁵⁵ While this speaker emphasized Ragusa's profound dependence on Venice

⁵⁵ "... sono circondati da tutte le bande dal stato de Signori Veneziani, et che à quelli Signori, e de quelli dipende la finta sua libertà." Ragusans are aware "che fin à quel tempo saran liberi, fin il quale tornerà util, et piacerà alla Republica di Venezia" (Biblioteca del Museo Correr, Venice, *Codice Cicogna* 978, number 21, without pagination). It should be added that this section makes ample use of the sketches of several orations preserved in the codices of Museo Correr in Venice, whose authors and audiences are, unfortunately, unknown. Yet the representativeness of these texts is beyond question. Their authors were high-ranking Venetian officials, and their audiences consisted of the political elite, most probably the senate or *collegio*.

as a reason for the “falseness” of its liberty, another Venetian, Lorenzo Bernardo, made the same point regarding Ragusan dependence on Istanbul. In his *relazione* of the Ottoman Empire delivered in 1592, this former *baillo* spoke of Ragusa with open disdain:

The community of Ragusa lives like a quail in the presence of a hawk, completely filled with fear; it pays its tribute of twelve thousand ducats per year and the same amount again for extraordinary expenses; it is frequently harassed by the Turkish savageries but appeases them all with money in order to survive and maintain that seeming liberty.⁵⁶

The claim that Ragusan “liberty” (i.e., independence) is not genuine seems to have been a commonplace of Venetian political discourse. This is confirmed by the fact that it appears not only in the rhetorically polished public orations but also in the everyday correspondence of the Venetian officials with their government. For example, immediately after the great earthquake of 1667, which seriously damaged Ragusa, the Venetian governor-general wrote to the Senate that “the Ragusans do not intend to renounce that liberty which, albeit in a restrained form, they are enjoying. . .”⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, the best formulation of the Venetian denial of authenticity of Ragusan liberty appears in a work of a Ragusan author: the aforementioned early-seventeenth-century poet Pasko Primi. Obviously familiar with Venetian stereotypes, Primi aptly summarized the traditional anti-Ragusan rhetoric in a satire about his native city. He had the neighboring Dalmatians proclaim that only after a number of impossible events took place, such as the merging of two Adriatic islands, “would

⁵⁶ “La comunità di Ragusi vive, come fa la quaglia sotto lo sparviero, tutta piena di timore; paga il suo tribute di zucchini dodicimila all’anno, e più di altrettanto di straordinario; spesso viene travagliata da avanie turchesche, ma tutte le accomoda con danari per vivere, e sostentare quella sua apparente libertà” (Eugenio Albéri, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, Serie III, vol. 2 [Florence: tipografia all’insegna di Clio, 1844], 389).

⁵⁷ Radovan Samardžić, *Borba Dubrovnika za opstanak posle velikog zemljotresa 1667. g.: arhivska građa (1667.–1670.)* [The struggle of Ragusa for survival after the great earthquake of 1667: The archival documents (1667–1670)] (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1960), 92.

one be able to say that Ragusan liberty is genuine / [liberty] which is a slave to all the noble lords of the earth.”⁵⁸

To grasp the full meaning of such statements, one should keep in mind that they were characteristic not only of the Venetians (although they were the most vocal); other European observers held similar doubts regarding Ragusan liberty. All of them raised the same basic question: Could such a miniscule and militarily helpless state, whose very survival depended on the goodwill of more powerful rulers, be considered truly “free” or “sovereign”? Was Ragusa to be seen as a full-fledged international subject, essentially no different from any other European state? In this context the usual Ragusan diplomatic rhetoric—typically insisting on the city’s weakness and trying to provoke pity—was not helpful.⁵⁹ The result of such diplomatic practice, together with the factual dependence on stronger protector-states, resulted in a somewhat dubious international reputation. It was aptly summarized by the English travel writer Paul Ricaut in the mid-seventeenth century:

This petty Republick hath always supported itself by submission, and addresses for favour and defence to divers powerful Princes, courting the favour of every one, never offering injuries, and when they receive them patiently support them; which is the cause the Italians call them *le sette bandiere*, or the seven banners, signifying that for their being and maintenance of the name of a free Republick, they are contented to become slaves to all parts of the world.⁶⁰

It should be stressed that such judgments were not merely the result of superficial scorn towards the small city-state but had a serious ideological

⁵⁸ Kurelac, *Runje i pahuljice*, 66.

⁵⁹ On the Ragusan diplomacy of weakness, see Vesna Miović, *Dubrovačka diplomacija u Istanbulu* [Ragusan diplomacy in Istanbul] (Dubrovnik and Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU, 2003), 160–61; 201–10. Regarding similar insistence on the weakness of the city in front of the Christian rulers, see Lovro Kunčević, “Retorika granice kršćanstva u diplomaciji renesansnog Dubrovnika” [The rhetoric of the frontier of Christendom in the diplomacy of Renaissance Ragusa], *Analiza Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 48 (2010): passim, especially 202–4.

⁶⁰ Paul Ricaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire, in Three Books Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Politic, Their Religion, and Military Discipline* (London: John Starkey and Henry Brome, 1668), 66.

background. They were a consequence of an influential early modern tradition of political thought that Quentin Skinner has labeled “neo-Roman” republicanism. At the center of this ideology—obviously, with roots in Roman law and philosophy—was the concept of liberty understood as the absence of dependence on the arbitrary will of another. In other words, liberty was not understood simply as an absence of external interference, factual independence, as it is frequently understood in the influential (neo-)liberal tradition today. In the neo-Roman understanding, true liberty meant the absence of even the *possibility* that the factual independence of an individual or a community would be undermined by an outside agent whenever he desired.⁶¹ Ragusa was clearly dependent upon the goodwill of several powerful states that could destroy its independence or at least profoundly influence its policies whenever they chose.

Perhaps this was the reason for one typical Venetian diplomatic practice. Until its fall the Serenissima systematically refused to grant the title of “republic” to Ragusa in its official correspondence, usually addressing the smaller neighbor only as a “city” (*città*) or “community” (*comunità*).⁶² That Ragusan military weakness and diplomatic humility were seen as unworthy of a truly sovereign state is confirmed by the aforementioned *relazione* of Lorenzo Bernardo from 1592. Addressing the way that Venice should negotiate at the Sublime Porte, Bernardo stressed that the Ottomans “should not be allowed to believe that [war with Venice] is absolutely impossible; and one should negotiate with dignity befitting a powerful and independent prince, and not like the Ragusans do. . .”⁶³ Of course, besides the dubiousness of Ragusan “liberty,” there might have been other reasons for the Venetian refusal to grant the prestigious title of “republic” to the smaller neighbor. The Venetian elite never forgot that they had ruled Ragusa in the past and, asserting a—however weak—historical right over the city, forbade ever explicitly acknowledging its sovereignty. Moreover, Venetians were wary of acknowledging that there was another sovereign

⁶¹ Good introductions to the topic are Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Quentin Skinner, “A Third Concept of Liberty,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002): 237–68.

⁶² The best summary of the problem is Ilija Mitić, “Za Serenissimu—Dubrovnik samo komuna nikad republika” [For the Serenissima—Ragusa always a community and never a republic], *Dubrovnik* 5 (1976): 65–69.

⁶³ *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato*, 403.

state on the Adriatic, because that state might eventually question the exclusive jurisdiction that Venice stubbornly claimed over its "Gulf."⁶⁴

Whatever reasons were behind this practice—and the aforementioned ones are not mutually exclusive—the Venetian administration upheld this principle for centuries, right up until the fall of the Serenissima. A great deal about the Venetian perception of Ragusa, and, especially, the importance of this principle is revealed by one exceptional episode when it was broken. In 1766, the chancellery officials discovered a letter from the senate to Ragusa from 1763 addressing the smaller city as "*Repubblica di Ragusi*." As the official report stressed, this "led to doubt whether the senate acknowledged Ragusa to hold the title of republic," so the officials consulted the manual of intitulations in the secret chancellery. To their great surprise, they discovered that somebody had crossed out the titles given to Ragusa "with a lot of ink" (*con forte inchiostro*), and only after consulting another manual was it established that Ragusa was granted only the titles of "city" (*città*) and "community" (*comunità*). This resulted in a minor scandal in the Venetian administration, a scandal which led to no less than an official investigation by the inquisitors of the state (*inquisitori di stato*). Despite a process that lasted several months and involved the interrogation of numerous witnesses, the inquisitors failed to discover who had defaced the manual of intitulations. The only thing they discovered was yet another official letter, this time from 1756, in which Ragusa was "in an equally scandalous way" (*con equal disordine*) again addressed as a republic. Of course, this investigation was largely motivated by concerns for state security, because somebody had obviously entered the chancellery and accessed the official documents. Nonetheless, the entire episode also reveals how important it was for the Venetians never to acknowledge that Ragusa was politically equal, or even similar, to their own republic.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ilija Mitić stressed this in his book *Dubrovačka država u međunarodnoj zajednici* [The Ragusan state within the international community] (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 2004), 95. However, Mitić's argument should be slightly modified. In fact, there was already a sovereign state in the Adriatic: leaving aside the unusual case of the Ottomans, it was the Habsburg Monarchy that eventually questioned the exclusive jurisdiction that Venice claimed over the sea. Nonetheless, the argument is generally valid, since the Venetians surely did not need yet another rival.

⁶⁵ The documents regarding this process are kept in the State Archives of Venice: *Inquisitori di stato*, busta 208, no. 34; *Inquisitori di stato*, busta 1219, "Processi e carte politiche 1753.–1766.," no. 135. It is possible that the entire affair was somehow connected to the efforts of the unofficial representative of Ragusa in Venice, Trajan

However, outside the narrow diplomatic context there were numerous exceptions to such a deprecating attitude. Many Venetians were ready to admit that Ragusan "liberty" was genuine and were willing to address the smaller neighbor as a "republic." A clear example is found in the mid-sixteenth-century report on Dalmatia and Albania written by the *sindico* Giovanni Battista Giustiniano, who stressed that Ragusans "rule themselves as a republic and live free, without obeying anyone."⁶⁶ Even in the most public types of political discourse, such as orations in the senate or *collegio*, Ragusa was sometimes spoken of with a measure of appreciation. For instance, in a seventeenth-century oration, Ragusa was mentioned as "a republic and a free city in Dalmatia," while in another, it was stressed that Ragusans were "under their own right and in liberty, not belonging more to one ruler than to another."⁶⁷ A genuine bestseller of political theory, *Del governo dei Regni e delle Repubbliche* by the Venetian Francesco Sansovino, took the same stance: the chapter dedicated to Ragusa bore the title "Del governo della Republica di Ragugia."⁶⁸ However, the most intriguing example of Venetian acknowledgement of Ragusa's status as a republic is found in the place where one would least expect it—in the Doge's Palace. In the Hall of the Shield (*Sala dello Scudo*), in which the coat of arms of the

Lalić, who spent decades trying to gain formal acknowledgement for his homeland. For Lalić, see Ilija Mitić, "Za Serenissimu—Dubrovnik samo komuna nikad republika," 65–69; Ilija Mitić, "Trajan Lalić—jedan od zaslužnih podanika Dubrovačke republike" [Trajan Lalić: One of the meritorious subjects of the Republic of Ragusa], *Dubrovački horizonti* 16–17 (1976–1977): 119–22.

⁶⁶ *Commissiones et relationes venetae*, tomus II (annorum 1525–1553), Simeon Ljubić ed., MSHSM vol. 8 (Zagreb: Academia scientarum et artium slavorum meridionalium, 1877), 249. A similar assessment was made by the Venetian travel writer F. Grassetto in the early sixteenth century: *Viaggio di Francesco Grassetto da Lonigo lungo le coste dalmate, greco-venete ed italiane nell'anno MDXI e seguenti*, ed. Antonio Ceruti, Monumenti storici pubblicati dalla R. Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, Serie IV, Miscellanea vol. 4 (Venice, 1887), 11.

⁶⁷ "... Ragusi dunque Republica, et città libera della Dalmazia. . ." Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 697, number 25, "Che i Veneziani debbano nelle presenti congiunture permettere il passo del Golfo all'esercito Turchesco per assediare la città di Ragusa." f. 70v. In the aforementioned oration calling for Venice to occupy Ragusa in the event of civil unrest there, the anonymous Venetian official continued by claiming that in such a case, the Ottomans would not react "essendo Ragusei (come veramente sono) di sua ragione, et libertà, non sono più ad un Principe, che ad un altro" (Museo Correr, *Provenienze Diverse*, 398c fasc. 8, "Sulla cessione di un Porto," no pagination).

⁶⁸ Ragusa is also labeled as a republic in the text itself (Sansovino, *Del governo dei Regni e delle Repubbliche*, 123–29).

current doge was traditionally displayed, there are several large maps on the walls, painted in the mid-eighteenth century by the cartographer Francesco Grisellini. On one of them, above Ragusa's territory, is an inscription in perfectly legible red letters: "RAGUSINA RES PUBLICA."⁶⁹

Besides the doubts regarding the authenticity of Ragusan liberty, another Venetian stereotype about Ragusans was that they pathologically hated Venice and were willing to do almost anything to harm it. Describing the Ragusan attitude towards their homeland, Venetian authors did not mince words: Ragusans were characterized by "an inborn maliciousness" towards the Venetians; despite all their efforts, they failed to hide "their natural hatred towards the republic"; the inhabitants of Ragusa were "more perverse and furious about the Venetian name than one can even imagine"; Ragusans were "the worst enemies of the republic"; and they were "born with inherited venom and are feeding on the burning hatred towards the most serene republic, believing that with our ruin they will gain safety."⁷⁰ Speaking of this hatred, Venetians not only accentuated its enormity but also represented it as an inherent part of the Ragusan character: it is described as being "inborn" (*nativa*), "natural" (*natural*), and "inherited" (*hereditaria*). In the rare instances when Venetian authors explained the reasons behind such epic animosity, they resorted to simple geopolitical reasoning. As one late-sixteenth-century orator pointed out:

The city of Ragusa cannot grow stronger except through the weakening of this one [Venice], because we keep them disarmed by force; and under our shadow [Ragusa] cannot grow nor feed itself. There-

⁶⁹ It is not clear how this oversight happened or how it survived several decades until the fall of the Republic of Venice. For the biography of Grisellini, see [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-grisellini_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-grisellini_(Dizionario_Biografico)/) (accessed November 30, 2015).

⁷⁰ These typical examples are taken from the correspondence of the Venetian senate and its officials in Dalmatia as well as the orations in the Venetian councils between the sixteenth and eighteenth century. The original quotations are "una nativa mala inclinazione. . ." Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 1999, "Arringhe varie in materie politiche veneziane di autore ignoto," number 15, no pagination; "...alcuno però d'essi non può nascondere il livor naturale contro la Repubblica. . ." Barozzi and Berchet, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori e baili veneti a Constantinopoli*, 395; ". . . la più perversa et arrabiata contro il nome veneto, che si possa immaginare. . ." Ljubić, "O odnošajih," 151; "Ragusei sono nemisi acerrimi della Republica. . ." Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 2107, "Documenti sui Ragusei," f. 187v; "Nascono con hereditario veneno, et si nutriscono con intenso odio alla serenissima repubblica, credendo con la nostra depresione di poner loro stessi in sicurezza. . ." Ljubić, "O odnošajih," 157.

fore it is natural that there exists an inborn maliciousness which we should not strengthen by injuries and insolence.⁷¹

What a commonplace Ragusan maliciousness was among the Venetian officials is well illustrated by one letter by the Dalmatian governor-general to the senate in 1661. Writing about a certain conflict that ended with Ragusan complaints in Venice, the governor-general remarked laconically: "it is enough to calm my spirit to see that that these accusations come from the Ragusan *signori*."⁷²

From the Venetian perspective, the biggest problem with Ragusans was not their alleged pathological hatred of Venice but the fact that they had powerful friends. Ragusa was frequently represented as a genuine hornet's nest, a neuralgic point that was better left alone because of the potentially catastrophic international consequences, primarily the intervention of its Ottoman patrons. Such an image of Ragusa clearly emerges in the aforementioned oration concerning the dispute about the islet of Sušac in 1592: the anonymous orator first admitted that the Ragusan *signoria* was indeed "disarmed and of small power." However, he immediately stressed that it "should not be underestimated and injured by Your Serenity because the mighty arm of the Grand Signore [the sultan] holds it in his protection, defends and keeps it from any offense and injury. . ."⁷³ If Ragusans were expelled from that islet by force, "like lazy animals to which nature gave no other weapon but voice," they would create a great uproar, inciting the "Turkish fury" against Venice.⁷⁴ After this vivid metaphor, the

⁷¹ "La città di Ragusi non può accrescere se non con la diminutione di questa, perche noi li teniamo per forza disarmati, et con l'ombra di nostra grandezza non può quella accrescere et alimentarsi. Per questo conviene esservi una nativa mala inclinatio- ne la quale noi non dobbiamo con ingiurie et insolenza esasperare." Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 1999, number 15, no pagination.

⁷² ". . . bastandomi per consolar l'animo mio il vedere, chel'accusa è de signori Ragusei." Ljubić, "O odnošajih," 165.

⁷³ "La Signoria di Ragusi è ben Signoria disarmata, et di humile potenza, ma non deve però essere sprezzata, et ingiuriata da Vostra Serenità perchè il braccio della potenza del Gran Signore chi la ha in prottettione, la protegge, et assicura da qualunque offesa, et ingiuria. . ." Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 1999, number 15, no pagination.

⁷⁴ "Se con la forza vederanno li Ragusei d'essere epulsati di questa, benche minima cosa, come possessione antica delli suoi maggiori, si acquetiranno, ó pure, come animali ignavi, à quali la natura non ha dato altr'arma che la voce, riclameranno, et esclameranno et con la voce, et con lo strico commoveranno, altizzeranno contro la Ser V. il furore turchesco, che li protegge et attende occasione di offenderla." Ibid., no pagination.

orator continued with a precise characterization of the usual Ragusan diplomatic rhetoric in Istanbul. Ragusans would complain to the sultan that the Venetians had unjustly taken away the possessions of their ancestors "which we have peacefully possessed for three hundred years under the protection of your shadow" and invite him to "avenge the violence with force and wash away the injury with blood."⁷⁵ The orator then put forth a series of dramatic metaphors, trying to persuade his audience that Venice should not provoke the Ottoman fury: "let's not enrage the serpents, shake the ruins, taunt the wasps. . ."⁷⁶ In the end, he suggested that an appeasing attitude towards the Ragusans could be useful in many ways and that renouncing a barren islet like Sušac would not hurt the prestige of Venice or its jurisdiction over the Adriatic.

Another related *topos* of Venetian political discourse was the claim that Ragusans were assisting the Ottomans to the detriment of Venice and all Christendom. Even worse, Ragusans were often accused of doing so for the basest of motives, for economic gain. Venetians were, of course, familiar with the immense trading profits Ragusa reaped in the Ottoman Empire, and the double espionage that it conducted between East and West. As Contarini remarked in his *Relazione* of the Ottoman empire, Ragusans [are] "double spies, because they inform the Pope and the Spanish what the Turks are doing, and to the Turks they are delivering information about the events in the Christian lands."⁷⁷ Ragusan espionage on behalf of the Ottomans even seems to have played a role in the strategic planning of the Venetian administration. For instance, the governor-general Lunardo Foscolo canceled an entire offensive in Albania in 1647 on the grounds that the Ragusans had learned about the operation and would doubtlessly inform the Ottomans. Without any need for rhetorical overstatements, in the internal communication with the Senate, Foscolo pointed out that

⁷⁵ It is worth quoting a slightly larger section of the text, because it reveals that the speaker was familiar with the traditional Ragusan rhetoric at the Sublime Porte: "Violentemente, ingiustamente, ingiuriosamente diranno à quel Signore, li Venetiani ci rapiscono le antichissime possessioni delli nostri maggiori, dedicate al nome tuo, al tuo imperio. Trecento anni sono passati che noi pacificamente le possediamo sotto la protettione dell'ombra tua, ci sono lora rapite. Difendi la giustitia con l'armi, vendica la violenza con la forza, lava l'ingiuria con sangue." Ibid., no pagination.

⁷⁶ "Non instighiamo le serpi, non crolliamo le rovine, non stuzzichiamo le vespi. . ." Ibid., no pagination.

⁷⁷ Barozzi and Berchet, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori e baili veneti a Constantinopoli*, 394–95.

one could not rely on the Ragusans, "not even in the affair regarding damaging the common enemy of Christendom, whose wishes they have shown themselves prone to fulfill. . ." ⁷⁸ During the wars between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian diplomats repeatedly accused Ragusans at the Christian courts of various other forms of assistance they had allegedly provided to the Ottomans, such as sending them a skilled labor force, money, or artillery. ⁷⁹ Venetian diplomats presented Ragusans as greedy merchants who "do not want to help Christians but to harm them so they join the Turks to destroy them," whereas Ragusan assistance to the Ottoman war effort was caused "not so much by fear but by desire to keep with them for the great profits. . ." ⁸⁰ These great profits, which plummeted during the Venetian-Ottoman wars, persuaded the Venetians that Ragusans were always eager to provoke new conflicts between the Serenissima and the Empire. The same orator who had argued for renouncing Sušac to Ragusa admitted that the smaller city had grown remarkably rich during the Fourth Venetian-Ottoman War of 1570–1573 (the War of Cyprus). He concluded that the Venetians should not provoke the Ottomans, since Ragusans "are greatly interested in a new war," and due to their influence on the Porte, they could easily incite the Ottomans "to raise their arms against us." ⁸¹

To sum up, when the early modern Venetians spoke about Ragusa, they usually did so with a combination of scorn and profound irritation. The fun-

⁷⁸ "... di Ragusei medesimi, della fede di quali ben poco fidarsi potrebbe, mentre anco in negotio concernente il danno del commun inimico di Christianità, propensi alle sodisfazioni di quello dimostrandosi. . ." ASV, *Senato, Dispacci*. PTM, busta 465, number 352, the letter of governor-general L. Foscolo dated December 15, 1647, from Zadar. For this example I am grateful to Domagoj Madunić.

⁷⁹ ASV, CX, *Secreta*, reg IX, f. 90v–91r, letter from September 16, 1570, to the rector of Kotor; ASV, *Senato, Dispacci*. PTM, b. 465, letter of governor-general L. Foscolo from September 19, 1647. I owe the last reference to Domagoj Madunić.

⁸⁰ Both examples are taken from the orations of the Venetian ambassadors in front of the Pope in 1571, during the War of Cyprus: "... perche non solamente li Ragusei non vogliono aiutar li christiani, ma vogliono farli danni, et si uniscono con li Turchi alla loro destruttione. . ." ASV, *Senato, Dispacci di Ambasciatori, Roma*, Filza 7 (1571) f. 258r, letter dated June 18, 1571; "Dicessimo; Padre Sto non tanto il timore, che hanno de Turchi li persuade à queste cose così mal fatte, quanto il desiderio, che hanno di trattenersi con loro per li gran guadagni. . ." ASV, *Senato, Dispacci di Ambasciatori, Roma*, Filza 7 (1571), f. 282r, letter dated June 30, 1571.

⁸¹ "Sono adunque grandemente interessati in desiderargli nuova guerra, non eccitiamo per tanto à procurarla, perche quanto ufficij possono fare con Turchi, onde facilmente qui gli animi pronti, et inclinati, si resolvino à mandar l'armi contra di noi" (Museo Correr, *Codice Cicogna* 1999, number 15, no pagination).

damental Venetian stereotype regarding Ragusa was that, due to its dependence on the will of more powerful states, the smaller city could not be considered genuinely sovereign and thus did not merit the title of republic. Besides continuing to assert historical rights over Ragusa and jurisdiction over its territorial waters, such a deprecating attitude also served to distance the Dalmatian city-state from Venice, denying the similarity so proudly accentuated by Ragusans themselves. In a way, Ragusa was represented as a distorted image of Venice, a parody of its greatness. It was the city that was *not* free and *not* a republic, a city that behaved towards the Ottomans in a way that Venice *should not*. Another, apparently even more widespread Venetian stereotype regarding Ragusans was that they had an inherent hatred of all things Venetian. Although it was to a large extent simply a stronger case of antipathy typical of many neighboring communities, this stereotype was also useful for a specific political purpose. As the aforementioned examples illustrate, in Venetian diplomacy it was reworked and used as an effective way of defaming Ragusans. They were represented as unscrupulous profiteers who, for their own selfish gain, cooperated with the Ottoman infidel in order to harm the interests of Venice and, thereby, also of Christendom itself.

Conclusion

The mutual images of two Adriatic republics, strikingly, tended to go to extremes: they were either strongly negative or, more rarely, strongly positive. Two communities perceived each other in a one-sided way, almost as caricatures, despite knowing each other very well. Although less passionate than the Ragusans, the Venetians portrayed the smaller republic in a remarkably biased fashion for centuries, displaying a typical combination of scorn and enmity. The tendency to extremes is even clearer when it comes to the Ragusan image of Venice. It appeared almost exclusively as either total demonization or unconditional idealization. A more neutral Ragusan assessment of Venice emerged only much later. As M. Foretić has stressed, the first Ragusans to write about Venice in a dispassionate way were several eighteenth-century writers who had strong ties with the city on the lagoons.⁸² Although these vivid mutual stereotypes were mostly

⁸² Foretić, "Venecija u zrcalu," 326–27.

natural consequences of constant tensions and competition between the two republics, they were also shaped and fueled by political interests. The elites of both cities found ways to refashion and use them to further their peculiar political goals, especially in the diplomatic arena.

How deeply rooted these stereotypes were is revealed by the remarkable fact that they survived the fall of both republics, continuing to shape their images well into modern times. Some of the most eminent academic historians of the two cities uncritically adopted the stereotypes from their documents and therefore interpreted the Venetian-Ragusan relationship in the traditional, simplistic way. Thus in an old, but still highly relevant study of this relationship, Šime Ljubić (1822–1896) wrote that the acknowledgement of Venetian jurisdiction over the Adriatic had awakened among Ragusans “a mortal hatred towards the Republic [of Venice], which ceased only with their fall.” Ljubić continued by stressing that Ragusans, surrounded by the Ottomans and the Venetians, “preferred the pagan to the Christian, thinking that was the way to preserve at least a semblance [sic] of their independence.” This sounds quite familiar: one of the founding fathers of Croatian historiography aptly summarized all the traditional Venetian stereotypes about the smaller Adriatic republic.⁸³ On the other side, the Ragusan stereotypes have proven to be equally, if not more, resilient. A thorough reading of the fundamental history of Ragusa by Vinko Foretić (1901–1986), published in 1980, clearly reveals the “predatory” image of the Venetians. Foretić writes of “the arrogance and perfidy of the Venetian government,” repeatedly mentioning Venetian “intrigues” against Ragusa, while the Venetians themselves are described as “violent,” “ruthless,” and, above all, “hypocritical.”⁸⁴

At the end of this study, one important caveat has to be made. It would be mistaken to think that the stereotypes analyzed here were cultural constructs without much significance, mere rhetorical *topoi* that occasionally recurred in historiography, literature, or diplomatic correspondence. They were far more than that: such lasting and powerful stereotypes profoundly influenced the concrete actions of both Venetian and Ragusan governments and their officials. Historical actors never operate in a purely rational and utilitarian manner, free from their own cultural heritage and thus also from the stereotypes established by their communities.

⁸³ Ljubić, “O odnošajih,” 97.

⁸⁴ Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, part 2, 83, 86, 87, 88, 91, 98, 111.

Consequently, the Venetian-Ragusan relationship, like any other relationship between two communities, cannot be fully understood unless their images of each other are taken into account. Although the concrete mechanism in which the stereotypes shaped political action might elude the historian—their effect is hard to demonstrate in individual cases—it does not mean that such influence should be ignored. These stereotypes should be reconstructed as an important element of the broader context in the history of any diplomatic relationship. They should serve as a welcome corrective to the usual (overly) rational and pragmatic criteria applied to interpreting the intentions behind political actions. In sum, the traditional history of diplomacy can be improved considerably by a significant dose of the history of culture.

All Moldavian Eyes on Ottomans:

Perceptions and Representations at the End of the Fifteenth Century and the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century

TEODORA C. ARTIMON

The period in Moldavian history known today as the age of Stephen the Great (1457–1504) followed the tumultuous first half of the fifteenth century¹ with an era of prosperity, economic growth, military success, and artistic and cultural development.² The echoes of Stephen's reign reverberated long afterward. In the sixteenth century, the Moldavian population not only remembered him for the stability that he brought Moldavia; it also widely hailed his achievements, particularly his military victories over the Ottoman Empire.

The foreign policy of Stephen the Great and his “crusades”³ against the Ottoman Empire strongly shaped the perception of the empire in sixteenth-

¹ The period immediately preceding Stephen the Great's reign was deeply marked by power struggles between various claimants to the throne. This weakened the principality and threw it into what could be called an “obscure quarter of a century,” which started with the death of the previous prince of Moldavia, Alexander the Good, under whom the country had prospered. For more on these twenty-five years of political chaos in which eight princes ruled up to two or three times each, see Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova* [A critical chronology of the princes in Wallachia and Moldavia], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001), 476–534. For a political overview of Moldavia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 33–40.

² This article will not discuss the economic impact of the time of Stephen the Great. For further information on this topic, see Maria Magdalena Székely, “Le monarque idéal dans l’imaginaire médiéval. René d’Anjou et Étienne le Grand,” *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 283–302.

³ For references to what modern historiography calls “Stephen the Great's crusade,” see Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior. O Istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* [Princeps Omni Laude Maior: A history of Stephen the Great], chapters “Proiecte de cruciadă” [Crusading projects] and “Noi proiecte de cruciadă” [New crusading projects] (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2005), 85–86 and 184–87.

century Moldavia. The present article debates the issue of the imaginary with reference to the Ottoman Other at the end of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century. It discusses the possible understandings and portrayals of the Other during the reign of Stephen the Great and, by comparison, during three remarkably different types of reigns of the sixteenth century—those of Peter Rareș (1527–1538; 1541–1546) and his two sons Elijah (1546–1551) and Stephen Rareș (1551–1552), which together could be called the small dynasty of Rareș within the larger Moldavian dynasty of the Mușatins.⁴ An analysis of the Moldavian reigns of the first half of the sixteenth century would show different levels of interaction with the sultan's empire, and consequently, different layers of representation as well.

Stephen the Great of Moldavia: The Champion of Christ

In a series of letters between Pope Sixtus IV and Stephen the Great in 1475 and 1476 regarding Moldavian-Ottoman relations,⁵ the Pope named the Moldavian prince "*verus christiane fidei athleta*,"⁶ the true champion of the Christian faith. The title, formally known as "Athleta Christi," which originally evoked an image of struggle,⁷ was a substantial honor in the Late Middle Ages: rulers such as János Hunyadi and George Kastrioti Skanderbeg received it following their battles with the Ottomans.⁸ Successful military actions against the Ottoman Empire were primarily what led to the bestowal of this papal title. Stephen the Great thus received it after

⁴ The Mușatin dynasty is the most significant dynasty of the Moldavian principality, of which Stephen the Great is the most prominent representative. For a thorough presentation of the dynasty, see Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Mușatinii* [The Mușatin dynasty] (Chișinău: Columna, 1991), 6–18 and subsequent chapters.

⁵ See the letters from Pope Sixtus IV in *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki* [Documents regarding the history of the Romanians collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki], vol. 2, part 1, 1451–1575, ed. Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki (Bucharest, 1891), documents no. X, XII, XVI, and XVII, 8–14.

⁶ See this letter in *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki*, vol. 2, part 2, 1451–1510, ed. N. Densușianu (Bucharest, 1891), document no. CCXVI, 241.

⁷ See the late-ancient-era and hagiographical origins of the title in Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 113–14.

⁸ For the circumstances in which Skanderbeg was named "Athleta Christi," see Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 74–75.

defeating Suleyman Pasha at the famous battle of Vaslui, Moldavia, in 1475.⁹ The fact that Pope Sixtus conferred such a title on Stephen brings out the prince's type of lifelong interaction with the Ottoman Empire. It is also indicative of his anti-Ottoman policy, followed by various anti-Ottoman representations employed by Stephen.

When Stephen the Great assumed the Moldavian throne in 1457, his anti-Ottoman views had already thoroughly developed. The perception of the Ottoman Other was generally negative in both Danubian Principalities,¹⁰ especially when represented in political circumstances: a 1359 anti-Ottoman alliance between the Wallachian prince Mircea the Old and the Hungarian king Sigismund described the Ottomans as "those terrible and deceitful sons of lies, enemies of the name of Christ, and our irreconcilable enemies."¹¹ Similarly, one year before Stephen's coronation, his predecessor referred to the Ottomans in similar terms: "those Turks, who have plundered so many times."¹²

Contexts and Conflicts

To have become prince of Moldavia surrounded by these established views, and given the political turmoil that arose following the siege of Constantinople, Stephen could not have remained an unbiased observer. It is

⁹ The Battle of Vaslui took place in January 1475 and is probably the military event that transformed Stephen the Great, the man, into a legendary character. The greatly outnumbered Moldavian army, due to the exhaustion of the Ottomans and the tactics employed by Stephen, managed to defeat Suleyman Pasha, who retreated after suffering great losses. See several relevant descriptions of the battle in Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, chapters "Lupta de la Vaslui" [The battle of Vaslui] and "Urmările victoriei de la Vaslui" [The consequences of the battle of Vaslui], 109–27; Eugen Denize, *Stephen the Great and His Reign* (Bucharest: Romanian Cultural Institute Publishing House, 2004), 82–90. See also some contemporary perceptions on the Battle of Vaslui in Constantin Rezachevici, *Rolul românilor în apărarea Europei de expansiunea otomană. Secolele XIV–XVI* [The role of the Romanians in defending Europe from the Ottoman expansion: Fourteenth to sixteenth century] (Bucharest: Albatros, 2001), 213–18.

¹⁰ The two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.

¹¹ *Relațiile internaționale ale României în documente (1368–1900)* [Romanian international relations in documents (1368–1900)], ed. Ion Ionașcu, Petre Bărbulescu, and Gheorghe Gheorghe (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971), document no. 5, 90.

¹² Act dated 1456 between Prince Peter Aron and his royal council on deciding to seek peace with the Ottoman Empire. See *ibid.*, document no. 16, 113.

not surprising, therefore, that his reign was marked by Christian/Muslim political, religious, and social divergences.

Three crucial events influenced Stephen's (and Moldavia's) view of the Ottoman Empire: the Battle of Vaslui, the Battle of Războieni, and the capture of the fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman. The conflicts with the Ottoman Empire were preceded by struggles with Wallachia. Stephen wanted to control Wallachia by appointing a prince who agreed with his policy of opposing Ottoman dominance in Wallachian territory. While most Wallachian rulers understood that, to retain control of the principality, they had to come to an understanding with the sultan,¹³ it seemed that Stephen alone genuinely believed that Wallachia could withstand Ottoman power. This policy was a primary underlying cause for the beginning of the Ottoman-Moldavian conflict. There were several reasons, in fact, for Sultan Mehmed II's anger towards the principality: Stephen's endless interference in Wallachia,¹⁴ his refusal to pay Moldavia's tribute to the Ottoman Empire,¹⁵ and Stephen's conquest of the fortress of Chilia, the port on the Black Sea, which the Ottomans also wished to annex.¹⁶ These factors drastically exacerbated the tensions between the Empire and Moldavia, but before an attack on Stephen's principality, the sultan gave the prince an ultimatum to pay his taxes, as can be seen in a number of Ottoman sources. Aşîk Paşazade tells how

the sultan, with the help of Allah almighty, after he subdued the vilayets of all the unfaithful beys, called to the Porte the ruler of Mol-

¹³ One such ruler was Basarab Laiotă, the prince who Stephen appointed several times as head of Wallachia and who eventually betrayed him politically by allying with the Ottoman Empire. For more information, see Ileana Cazan and Eugen Denize, *Marile puteri și spațiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* [The great powers and the Romanian space in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries] (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2001), 73–74.

¹⁴ On this topic, see the conflicts Stephen had with Radu the Fair, the rightful prince of Wallachia. See, for instance, Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 98–101.

¹⁵ Stephen stopped paying his tribute to the Ottoman Empire in 1473. See Gorovei, *Mușatinii*, 59.

¹⁶ These reasons seem to have set off the war between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. The sultan, tired of Stephen's "misbehavior," reacted quickly and violently, which resulted in the Battle of Vaslui. For a thorough explanation of the factors involved in the Ottoman-Moldavian conflict, see Cazan and Denize, *Marile puteri și spațiul românesc*, 70–74.

davia and told him: "This time you will bring yourself the tribute, just like the tribute from the Wallachian vilayet is brought, and you will be with us just like the bey of Wallachia is, so that we know in which way you live with us." With these words the unfaithful was summoned, but he did not come and did not even take account of them [the sultan's words].¹⁷

With Stephen the Great's decision to ignore the sultan's ultimatum, an attack on Moldavia was inevitable; it came in January 1475. The Ottoman army, composed of about 120,000 troops¹⁸ and headed by Suleyman Pasha, marched towards Moldavia in the winter of 1474. Stephen the Great possessed an army of around 40,000¹⁹ troops, and because of the large discrepancy between the two military forces, Stephen used all available tactics. The prince therefore adopted a scorched-earth policy in southern Moldavia, destroying all food supplies.²⁰ It was under these circumstances that the Ottoman army, tired and hungry,²¹ entered Stephen's principality

¹⁷ Aşık Paşa Zade in Eugen Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună. Relaţiile turco-veneţiene şi influenţa lor asupra spaţiului românesc. Secolele XV-XVI* [The Romanians between the lion and the crescent moon: Ottoman-Venetian relations and their influence on the Romanian space; Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries] (Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2009), 134.

¹⁸ "... the Turks, counting about 100,000 and 17,000 people from Wallachia. ..." See "Cronica Moldo-Germană" [The Moldavian-German chronicle], in Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504–2004. *Portret în cronică* [Stephen the Great and the Saint 1504–2004: Portrait in chronicle] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 26 (hereinafter *Portrait in Chronicle*).

¹⁹ "... only having about 40,000 soldiers. ..." See Jan Długosz, "Historia Polonica," in *Portrait in Chronicle*, 164. Other sources give a somewhat larger number: 50,000 people. See more information in Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 112.

²⁰ Florin Constantiniu calls the fighting between the Ottoman Empire and the Danubian Principalities a medieval "asymmetric conflict," a clash between two armies of different sizes. Constantiniu discusses the strategy used by the principalities in this type of conflict—always a defensive strategy, focused on a tactic meant to discourage the Ottoman conquest. These tactics included avoiding an open-field battle, thus preventing the enemy from using its numerical and technical superiority. A scorched-earth area would be created by evacuating the population and destroying or burning the crops and houses located along the enemy's path. Any military groups that left the main army in search of food would be subject to surprise attacks by the Romanians. This harassment of the enemy therefore entailed not only weakening it by denying it access to food and shelter, but also demoralizing the people, who would feel insecure. For more, see Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului roman* [An honest history of the Romanian people] (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2010), 87–93.

²¹ Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 113.

in February 1475. The prince ensured that the battle would take place not in an open field, but in a region that would serve his strategy. The armies thus met in the narrow valley of the Bârlad River, covered by fog that day. The Ottomans were flanked, and sources say that about 40,000 Ottoman soldiers died and another 4,000 were taken prisoner.²² The Battle of Vaslui was a resounding Moldavian success, which was reflected in the voices of the time, as well as in Stephen the Great's famous letter to Western leaders, in which he described the fight and the enemies while asking for assistance against the imminent counterattack of the Ottomans, aid which never came.

Although the Moldavians triumphed at Vaslui and "took the sword in their hands and, with the help of God, went over them, stepped on them [the Ottomans], and took them through their spears,"²³ the Ottoman response came promptly. This time, the sultan himself, Mehmed II, led the armies. The Ottomans had conquered the Khanate of Crimea earlier in the year, so at the time of the attack on Moldavia, in July 1476, the sultan had additional help from the Tartars, who attacked Moldavia from the north, while he marched from the southeast with some 150,000 soldiers. At the same time, Stephen faced discontent from his own men, who were eager to return north to their lands and defend their households and families against the Tartar attack. He released his men for two weeks, and thus, during the clash with the Ottomans, he was without most of his army. Instead, Stephen had under his command only his boyar army, consisting of about 10,000–12,000, at the time of battle.²⁴ The battle was fought at a place named Valea Albă (also known as Războieni), where Stephen was quickly defeated. He

²² "... but there were those [of the Ottoman army] who were not used to fighting and got tired. . . . They were looking for the chance to run away, and when they had the opportunity, they scattered away and they were what caused the defeat. Leaving the battle and the slaughter, they ran and they did not look back. There was no way to do that [to look back]." See the Ottoman chronicler Tevarih-i Ali-i Osman on the Battle of Vaslui in *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor. Secolele IV-XVI* [Collection of documents regarding the history of the Romanians: Fourth to sixteenth centuries], ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Liliana Trofin (Bucharest: Editura Universității București, 2006), 183.

²³ From the Letter of Stephen to the Christian rulers after the Vaslui victory (January 25, 1475), in *Istoria României în texte* [Romanian history in texts], ed. Bogdan Murgescu (Bucharest: Corint, 2001), 136.

²⁴ See Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni laude Maior*, 154.

then retreated to the mountains while the sultan proceeded to the Moldavian stronghold of Suceava, but with his army suffering from hunger and plague, he did not conquer the fortress and opted instead to leave Moldavia. Thus for the Moldavians, the Battle of Valea Albă may be seen as a military failure but a political success, as the prince remained in power and the principality was not transformed into a *paşalîc*.²⁵

The third significant event that shaped the perception of the Ottomans during the reign of Stephen the Great was the conquest of the prince's most cherished fortresses: Chilia and Akkerman. These two fortresses, ports on the Black Sea, were the "gates and keys"²⁶ of Western trade in the East and were also missing pieces for the sultan to take full control over Black Sea trade. In 1484, Bayezid II led his armies to the two fortresses and made Ottoman dominance over the Black Sea as complete as possible: Chilia was conquered after a ten-day siege in July 1484, and Akkerman was conquered shortly afterwards in August.²⁷

Stephen's Perception: Seeing the Other, Seeing the Self

These three events greatly influenced the perception of not only Stephen's time but also that of his successors. Out of the Moldavian conflicts with the Ottomans, Stephen crafted an enemy whose image continued to be shaped in various negative forms by his descendants. Moreover, the reign of Stephen

²⁵ Florin Constantiniu cites the Battle of Războieni as a perfect example of an asymmetric military conflict. It involved the sultan's expedition with a numerous army, in which the Ottomans were victorious but could not use their superiority to obtain their political goal, the dethronement of Stephen the Great. See Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 88–89 and 112.

²⁶ Szekely and Gorovei, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 222.

²⁷ "In the same year [1483], July 14, Bayezid Emperor with the Turks came over the fortress of Chilia. . . . Afterwards, on August 5, they also took Cetatea Albă [Akkerman]. . . ." See "Letopisețul de la Putna nr. II" [The chronicle of Putna, no. 2], in *Portrait in Chronicle*, 36. Moreover, in this roughly one-month period, Stephen seems to have lost not only Chilia and Akkerman but also four other ports on the Black Sea (Chilia, Licostomo, Akkerman, Cetatea Neagră, Sevastopole, and Ilice), which made the economic, military, and crucially, psychological impact on the prince even greater. See details on the conquest and its consequences in Alexandru Simon, "Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: New Documents," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 24 (2008): 177–96.

created a system of values for both the Ottomans and the Moldavians; when compared, these values highlight the (mostly imaginary) traits of both sides.

The most thorough representations of the Ottomans can be found in sources discussing the victory of Vaslui. They are also found in documents concerning the failed battle of Războieni, although information on that is much scarcer. The *ahidnâme* issued by Mehmed II to Stephen the Great in 1480, after both battles, stated that “devil whispers lodged into his [Stephen’s] mind the thought of upheaval and disturbance . . . showing boldness and straying from the path of obedience.”²⁸ Six chronicles, all written in or soon after Stephen’s lifetime, present the clashes of Vaslui and Războieni in such a way that a Moldavian portrait of the Ottomans can be reconstructed.²⁹ The Ottoman is unquestionably the stranger, the foreigner, the enemy *par excellence*. While there are no physical descriptions of the Ottoman, he is constructed³⁰ as the opposite of the Moldavian. First, he is marked as different by language and religion, as indicated by references to “unfaithful tongues”³¹ and “pagan tongues”³² used in discussing the Battle of Vaslui. The same descriptions are repeated in the case of Războieni, where the good Christians fell “under the hands of the unfaithful and pagan tongues.”³³ Another essential characteristic referred to was their multitude: they considerably outnumbered the Moldavians and their army. It should be noted that references to the large Ottoman army appear only in descriptions of the victorious battle of Vaslui.³⁴ It could

²⁸ *Documente turcești privind istoria României. 1455–1774* [Ottoman documents regarding the history of Romania, 1455–1774], vol. 1, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1976), 6.

²⁹ Six chronicles were used for this part of the study. There are others as well, which the author preferred not to use because of a lack of relevant description, such as “Cronica moldo-polonă” [The Moldavian-Polish chronicle], in *Portrait in Chronicle*, 41–45.

³⁰ For a useful study on the construction of the enemy, see Umberto Eco, *Inventing the Enemy*, trans. Richard Dixon (New York: Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), chapter “Inventing the Enemy,” 1–22.

³¹ “Letopisețul anonim al Moldovei” [The anonymous chronicle of Moldavia], in *Portrait in Chronicle*, 16.

³² *Ibid.*, 17.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Three relevant entries refer to the number of Ottomans: “. . . and a great mass was cut. . .” in “Letopisețul de la Putna nr. I” [The chronicle of Putna, no. 1], in *Portrait in Chronicle*, 31; “. . . then a large mass with no number fell and many were caught alive, without number. . .” in “Letopisețul de la Putna nr. II,” 35—the remark that they were “without number” means they were innumerable; “. . . they cut a large mass of

be argued that in order to explain the Moldavian defeat of Războieni, the chroniclers could have mentioned the enemy's numerical superiority. However, they opted for a different rhetorical strategy: they showed the significance of the Vaslui victory by pointing out that the Moldavians defeated a large army, rather than explaining the defeat at Războieni through numerical inferiority. The fact that the enemy is numerous also implies that he is destructive. As expected, all information regarding Ottoman destructiveness refers to the disaster of Războieni. Chronicles reveal that the sultan's men "plundered the country and came to Suceava [the royal seat] and burned the market and went back, plundering and burning the country."³⁵ Other sources say that the Ottomans ravaged "the entire country"³⁶ but that they could not "conquer any fortresses."³⁷ The circumstances of the Ottoman retreat from Moldavia after Războieni demonstrated that the sultan did not leave Moldavia as anything but a victor. One chronicle, however, known as "the German version of Stephen the Great's Chronicle," gives a different view of what happened, suggesting that the Ottomans actually retreated out of fear. After the defeat at Războieni, the chronicle implies that Stephen retreated but soon re-gathered his armies and confronted Mehmed and his men a second time.³⁸ At this point, the German chronicle says, "the Turks believed that he [Stephen] received help from the Poles or the Hungarians and they ran towards their home."³⁹ The same chronicle portrays the Battle of Vaslui similarly. Immediately after Stephen's victory, the chronicle recounts that, "the Turk could barely escape . . . they [the Ottomans] were chased another eight full miles, in heavy mud."⁴⁰

Turks. . ." in "Analele Putnene" [The annals of Putna], in *Cronicele moldovenești înainte de Urechia* [Moldavian chronicles before Ureche], ed. Ioan Bogdan (Bucharest: Litotipografia Carol Gobl, 1891), 196.

³⁵ "Letopisețul anonim al Moldovei," 17.

³⁶ "Letopisețul de la Putna nr. I," 31.

³⁷ "Cronica Moldo-Germană," 26.

³⁸ This description of Stephen's counteroffensive does not square with the actual historical events. In reality, Stephen's whereabouts after the defeat at Războieni are unknown, while the Ottoman army returned to the Empire after being exhausted and unable to conquer Suceava and the strategic Moldavian fortresses. See a thorough presentation of the battle at Războieni in Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 147–59.

³⁹ *Cronica lui Ștefan cel Mare (Versiunea Germană a lui Schedel)* [The chronicle of Stephen the Great (Schedel's German Version)], ed. Ion Constantin Chițimia (Bucharest: Casa Școalelor, 1942), 66.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

Once more, the image of the frightened Ottoman emerges. By emphasizing the pursuit of "eight full miles," the chronicler is not simply praising the Moldavian success but also reversing the actual image that the Ottomans had in Moldavia (the Ottomans actually elicited fear and respect). Neither Stephen the Great nor any of his chroniclers ever found it necessary to mention such a chase with a different enemy, such as the Wallachian prince Radu the Fair, with whom Stephen had just as many military conflicts⁴¹ but who did not represent any threat to Moldavia.

However, Stephen's own account can be read in his letter of January 25, 1475, two weeks after the victory at Vaslui, to "the Hungarian Crown and to all the countries where this letter will arrive."⁴² This letter consists of two parts: the first part describes the victory, while the second one asks for help from Christian rulers upon the inevitable return of the Ottoman army. Both parts are well constructed from a rhetorical point of view. The first part opens with a concise description of the ruler's image of the enemy: "the unfaithful emperor of the Turks has long been, and still is, the destroyer of Christianity, and he thinks all day of ways to subdue it."⁴³ The letter then elaborates on the large discrepancy between the two armies: the "unfaithful" field "a great army of 120,000 people."⁴⁴ After stressing the name of the man heading this large army, "Suleyman Pasha as its captain,"⁴⁵ Stephen lists all the other relevant participants in the battle:

all the courtiers of the sultan, with the people of Rumelia and with the prince of Wallachia with all his power, with Asan-beg, Ali-beg, Scander-beg, Grana-beg, and Osu-beg, Valtivu-beg, Serefaga-beg, ruler in Sofia, Cusenra-beg, Paier-beg and his son Isac Pasha with all his crowd of janissaries.⁴⁶

⁴¹ For the decisive and most relevant conflict between Stephen the Great and Radu the Fair, see Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 98–101.

⁴² *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare* [The documents of Stephen the Great], vol. 2, ed. Ioan Bogdan (Bucharest: Atelierele Grafice Soccec & Co., 1913), document CXLIII, 319.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

This *dramatis personae*, “the greatest captains of the battlefield,”⁴⁷ contrasts with the army of Stephen, which receives a simple pronoun: “us.” This extreme contrast once more highlights the extent of the Moldavian victory, just as the aforementioned chronicles did when presenting the numbers of the Ottoman army. The second part of the letter is a plea for help but also a type of “promotional” text meant to draw European powers into the now-unstoppable conflict between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁸ In this second part there is less emphasis on the Ottomans and more emphasis on Moldavia as the “gate of Christianity.”⁴⁹ The image of the Ottoman is still present, however, as Stephen is concerned with the vengeful character of the sultan: “hearing about this, the pagan emperor of the Turks is thinking about revenge.”⁵⁰

A similar concern appears in another letter sent to Venice in 1478 through Stephen’s uncle John Tsamblak. Although the letter is a presentation of Stephen’s conception of the anti-Ottoman war, it still gives a glimpse of how the prince saw his enemies. Following the defeat at Războieni, Stephen became furious. Therefore, the letter criticizes not only the Ottomans but also the Christian powers that failed to send help when the sultan attacked Moldavia in 1476. Stephen was once more asking for support in the anti-Ottoman conflict, and the most relevant part of the letter consists of his attitude towards a possible conquest:

If God does not want me to be helped, one of two things will happen: either this country will perish, or I will be forced, on demand, to submit to the pagans. This, however, I will never do. I would prefer one hundred thousand dead people over this. I rely on your help.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See more on this letter as a propaganda text in Ștefan Gorovei, “Informație, propagandă, mistificare: scrisoarea din 25 ianuarie 1475” [Information, propaganda, mystification: The letter of January 25, 1475], *Analele Putnei* [Annals of Putna], vol. 2 (2007), 21–26. Bogdan Murgescu also discussed this aspect of the letter and refers to it as a “circumstantial plea.” See Bogdan Murgescu, *Țările române între Imperiul Otoman și Europa Creștină* [The Romanian principalities between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2012), 17.

⁴⁹ *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, document CXLIII, 321.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., vol. 2, document CLIV, 350.

Although these words do not discuss the Ottomans directly, they do give a clear understanding of how Stephen perceived them. The perception is the same in the letters of both 1475 and 1478 (and certainly similar to the general perceptions in fifteenth-century Christian Europe): a frightening Other is menacing state integrity.

Words and texts were surely not the only means through which this perspective was conveyed. Visual representation was an equally valuable instrument, as the mural scene of The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross (Pătrăuți Monastery) shows (Fig. 1).⁵² As a scene rarely found in Orthodox iconography and much debated in historiography, this mural has been interpreted in several ways. Most of them conclude that it was intended to represent Stephen's crusade against his Islamic enemies, as well as a sign of the political and religious aspirations of an Orthodox monarch.⁵³

The image illustrates a saintly mounted procession headed by a winged rider, identified in an inscription as the Archangel Michael, who leans towards the rider close behind him, identified as Constantine the Great in the same inscription. Following the Archangel and Constantine, there are the military saints of George and Demetrius, who in turn are followed by a large group of other saints. André Grabar has identified some of them as Saints Theodore, Procopius, Mercury, and Nestorius, but others are more difficult to recognize.⁵⁴ In the upper-right-hand corner of the scene, in the sky, a bright white cross is visible, which gives meaning to the entire mural. The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross illustrates the miraculous vision of the Holy Cross by the Emperor Constantine: on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge against the Roman Emperor Maxentius, Constantine had a vision of the cross, accompanied by the wording "in this sign, [you shall] conquer." He subsequently won the battle, opening the path towards Christianization throughout the Roman Empire. In drawing a parallel with Constantine's victory over the pagans, a significant number of studies have linked the emperor's victory with an eventual

⁵² Located in the narthex of the Pătrăuți Monastery, built and decorated in 1487. Vasile Drăguț, *Dicționar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească* [Encyclopedic dictionary of Romanian medieval art] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și enciclopedică, 1976), 227.

⁵³ Both of these hypotheses were formulated in the first and groundbreaking study of the mural scene. See André Grabar, "Les croisades de l'Europe orientale dans l'art," in *Mélanges Charles Diehl* (Paris: Leroux, 1930).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.



Fig. 1: Radu Alexandru, "Cavalcada Sfintei Cruci" [The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross], on *CrestinOrtodox.ro*, <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/liturgica/pictura/cavalcada-sfintei-cruci-137351.html> (last time accessed: June 6, 2016).

victory of Stephen the Great over his pagan enemies—namely, the Ottomans.⁵⁵ Considering this interpretation, it seems that Stephen had this scene painted within the Pătrăuți iconographical program⁵⁶ as a sign of his ambition and belief in a future victory over the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, Sorin Ulea has highlighted the consistency of the message with the scene's placement: directly above the entrance door of the narthex, placed in such a way that people exiting the monastery would surely remember the image.⁵⁷

Before analyzing in depth the anti-Ottoman significance of the scene and its meaning for the perception of the Other, an observation should

⁵⁵ Many historians referred to this interpretation of the scene, starting with the aforementioned study of André Grabar. See some of the studies referring to the anti-Ottoman significance of this scene in Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Sec. XV-XVI* [Mural painting in Moldavia: Fifteenth to sixteenth centuries] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1982), 13–16; Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale în Țările Române* [The history of feudal art in the Romanian Principalities], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1959), 806; Virgil Vătășianu, *Studii de artă veche românească și universală* [Studies of old Romanian and universal art] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 51; Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab și învățăturile către fiul său Theodosie: problemele controversate* [Neagoe Basarab and his teachings to his son Theodosie: Controversial problems] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1973), 85–86.

⁵⁶ It should be added that this scene cannot be found in any version of the *Ermeneia*, the guide of Byzantine Orthodox iconographical programs.

⁵⁷ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești* [The original and the ideological meaning of Moldavian exterior painting], *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei* 10 (1963): 76.

be made. The monastery was built and painted in 1487, three years after Stephen the Great lost his prized fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman. Stephen was deeply affected by the conquest of his fortresses,⁵⁸ but as a positive result, he was no longer “obsessed”⁵⁹ with losing them. Thus he accepted peace with Sultan Bayezid II in 1486⁶⁰ and started focusing less on his external policy and more on his internal one, as well as on his dynastic and church-building programs.⁶¹

The historical context is very important, because the devastating events of 1484 must have influenced the construction of Pătrăuți. The historian Dumitru Năstase saw a crucial connection between the scene of the Mounted Procession and the conquest of the fortresses. He argued that the scene shows that Stephen viewed peace with the Ottomans as temporary, that he still considered himself to be at war, and that he was “calling on celestial forces, the most qualified to help him break out of the war.”⁶²

⁵⁸ There are a few cases that demonstrate the ways in which Stephen and Moldavia were impacted by the 1484 conquest. A report of the Venetian Giovanni Dario shortly after the conquest refers to the fortresses as “quelle do terre che era la vita soa”—the two fortresses that were vital for him (meaning Stephen). See Ovidiu Cristea, “L’expédition du sultan Bajazet II contre la Moldavie (1484) dans les rapports vénitiens de Constantinople,” in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Altel al credinței creștine* [Stephen the Great and the Saint: Champion of the Christian faith] (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2004), 213. Another indication of the effect of the conquest should also be noted: in May 1484, when Stephen learned that the Ottoman army had begun the expedition to Moldavia, the activity of the Royal Council ceased, and documents were no longer issued. In normal circumstances, the Council should have resumed its activity immediately after Stephen’s return to his royal seat. However, it resumed activity only two years later, in 1486. Historians Gorovei and Székely believe this was caused by the difficulty of accepting the defeat. See *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 221.

⁵⁹ Stephen the Great was well aware of the strategic and economic significance of the two fortresses. See Ștefan Andreescu, *Istoria românilor: cronicari, misionari, ctitori* (sec. XV–XVIII) [The history of the Romanians: Chroniclers, missionaries, ktitors (Fifteenth to seventeenth centuries)] (Bucharest: Universităţii, 1997), 125.

⁶⁰ For more information on the Moldavian–Ottoman peace of 1486, see Ștefan Gorovei, “Pacea moldo-otomană din 1486. Observații pe marginea unor texte” [The Moldavian–Ottoman peace of 1486: Observations on some texts], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 1504–2004. Portret în istorie* [Stephen the Great and the Saint 1504–2004: Portrait in history] (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2003), 497–517.

⁶¹ Stephen’s reign can be divided in two parts when discussing the relationship with the Ottoman Empire: the periods with and without active hostilities against the Ottomans. For the latter period, also characterized by an elaborate church-building campaign, see Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, section “Marea rugăciune” [The great prayer], 249–420.

⁶² Dumitru Năstase, *Ideea imperială în Țările Române. Geneza și evoluția ei în raport cu vechea artă românească (secolele XIV–XVI)* [Imperial thought in the Romanian Prin-

A further interpretation calls for an eschatological perspective. Other historians⁶³ associated the scene of the Mounted Procession with a sixteenth-century icon from Moscow known as *Ecclesia militans*.⁶⁴ The scene represents a monumental military procession headed by the Archangel Michael, the herald of the Last Judgment. It represents further political ambitions following the 1552 conquest of Muslim Kazan by Ivan the Terrible, which is why the character leading the army is sometimes erroneously identified with Ivan himself.⁶⁵ The procession also includes Constantine the Great and Russian saints, all leaving the burned-down Kazan on the upper right-hand side of the scene and moving towards a New Jerusalem, where the Virgin Mary and Christ Child await the holy procession. The River of Life flowing in the fortress of Jerusalem indicates that the inspiration for the entire scene was the Apocalypse of John, thus lending the entire work a sense of eschatological optimism.⁶⁶ The similarities between *Ecclesia militans* and *The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross* likewise gave the latter a sense of optimism: the scene told its viewers that the time of Christian victory, together with the Last Judgment, was at hand.⁶⁷

Considering this interpretation and the connection of the painting to the events of 1484, the scene may be seen as a future encouragement against Moldavia's enemies but also as a prayer: Stephen the Great, having fought the Ottomans for over a decade, would now end these conflicts

cialities: Its genesis and evolution in relation to old Romanian art (Fourteenth to sixteenth centuries)] (Athens: Fondation Européenne Dragan, 1972), 7.

⁶³ André Grabar was not the only one to see this connection; Emil Dragnev also noted it in his article "Enigma Pătrăuților. O versiune de interpretare" [The Pătrăuți enigma: A way of interpretation], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt în contextul epocii sale și al posterității* [Stephen the Great and the Saint in the context of his own era and of his posterity], ed. D. Dragnev, I. Cașu, E. Dragnev, and V. Păslăriuc (Chișinău: Civitas, 2004). Similarly, Liviu Pilat thoroughly explained this connection and its eschatological meaning in "Messianism and Eschatology during the Time of Stephen the Great," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 101–16.

⁶⁴ See the icon on the Google Art Project platform here: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d9/Blessed_Be_the_Host_of_the_King_of_Heaven%E2%80%A6_Google_Art_Project.jpg (accessed November 20, 2015).

⁶⁵ Claes Arvidsson and Lars Erik Blomqvist, eds., *Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 148.

⁶⁶ Liviu Pilat, "Messianism and Eschatology," 110.

⁶⁷ Liviu Pilat also interpreted the white cross previously mentioned as the cross in Constantine the Great's vision, as a symbol for Mount Golgotha. Ibid., 111.

with the hope of divine help and salvation for both his army and all Moldavia.⁶⁸ Emil Dragnev thus saw Stephen the Great not as an actual participant at the metaphorical battle represented at Pătrăuți, but rather as the man kneeling in front of it, praying for the victory of Christians.⁶⁹

We see that historians have put forth two interpretations—one politico-military and the other eschatological—that are not mutually exclusive. Both hypotheses refer to a desire to defeat the enemy, either during Stephen the Great's reign or through a divine act of God in the Last Judgment. To decide whether either of these interpretations is correct is therefore less relevant for this study, as they both predict a type of Christian victory.

It is relevant, however, how this scene, as well as other sources, highlights the contrasting representations of Moldavians and the Ottomans. Although the viewer sees the army of the Christians, the army of the enemies is nevertheless present. Whenever a victorious army is represented, the image of the defeated army is also represented in absence, with the viewer "seeing" it unconsciously. Therefore, the representation of the victor's glory brought with it the unseen and certainly unconscious opposite representation of the defeated non-Christian/Ottoman army. While the viewer of the Mounted Procession saw the triumphant army of Archangel Michael and Constantine I vividly and in full color, the omission of the defeated allowed him to imagine the opposing army as he wished—regardless of the Ottoman's real image. That the Pătrăuți scene features Constantine the Great thus gives the impression that the enemy, now (or soon to be) defeated, must have been a powerful one.

Similar contrasts can be seen in other triumphant descriptions featuring Stephen the Great himself. The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia presents the entry of Stephen in Suceava after he defeated the Ottomans at the Battle of Vaslui:

. . . there was war at Vaslui with the Turkish powers and Prince Stephen won, *with the mercy of God and with the help of Jesus Christ*, the living Son of God, who was born of the Holy Virgin for our salvation. And *God allowed* those unfaithful tongues to be put to the sword, and a great, uncountable mass of people fell then, and count-

⁶⁸ Emil Dragnev, "Enigma Pătrăuților," 80.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

less of them were captured alive and also killed, and only one was left alive, the son of Sac Pasha. And their flags and great scepters, more than forty scepters, were taken. And Prince Stephen returned with *all his soldiers as a bearer of victories* to his royal seat of Suceava, and ahead of him came the metropolitans and the priests, holding the Gospels in their hands and praising God for what was given to them as a gift from the Almighty and blessing the tsar: "*Long live the tsar.*"⁷⁰

The italicized passages say something about both Stephen the Great and his Moldavians, but also about the Ottomans, employing the same device of "contrast through absence." There are a few artifices here that elucidate the perception of Ottomans in Moldavia: a first observation is that all actions and their outcomes occurred with and through the permission of God. This fact points out the most relevant dichotomy between the two powers: the difference of faiths. What the Anonymous Chronicle tells is that, given that the Moldavians were considerably outnumbered, the victory could only have been due to the direct intervention of God. Moreover, the victorious ruler was always inspired, led, and protected by God. Thus, regardless of the enemies' number, the result could only have been in favor of those supported by God.⁷¹ It is easy to conclude, then, that the Ottomans' greatest flaw was their difference in religion—the God of the Moldavians would have never allowed them to win unless he was trying to punish the Moldavians for their sins.⁷²

The anonymous author gives a vague description of the Ottoman army: they were numerous, with many flags and scepters. The fact that the author mentioned the taking of the forty large scepters not only highlighted the victory but also suggested Ottoman humiliation. This contrast between victory and humiliation is intensified by the word "all" in the sentence "Prince Stephen returned with *all his soldiers.*" While the enemy was shamed with such a defeat, the Moldavians ended the battle with "all" their

⁷⁰ "Letopiseșul anonim al Moldovei," 16. Italics are mine.

⁷¹ For more on the "role" of God in Moldavian conflicts, see Ovidiu Cristea, "War Outbreak, Victories and Triumphal Entries in Moldavia of Stephen the Great: Events, Representations, Interpretations," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 105–32 (esp. 121–22).

⁷² The Moldavian chronicles imply that every victory, as well as every defeat, is dictated by the will of God. The very beginning of a conflict is seen as a punishment for the Moldavians' sins. See *ibid.*, 112.



Fig. 2: Teodor Danalache, "Steagul Sfântului Ștefan cel Mare" [The Battle Flag of Stephen the Great], on CrestinOrtodox.ro, <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/liturgica/vesminte/steagul-sfantului-stefan-mare-125902.html> (last time accessed: June 6, 2016).

soldiers alive. Certainly, "all" is a simple modifier meant to enhance the Moldavian victory and to subtly denigrate the power of the Ottoman army.

Stephen the Great is named "bearer of victories." He is associated with the attributes of a saint,⁷³ diminishing the image of the enemy, of the non-

⁷³ Historians have already discussed the importance of Stephen's comparison and association with saints while he was still alive. Stephen was named "bearer of victo-

saint or anti-saint by contrast. This idea may be seen in what is thought to be the battle flag of Stephen the Great (Fig. 2),⁷⁴ offered in 1500 to the Athonite monastery of Zograf. Discussing the flag that bore the representation of Saint George the Bearer of Victories, historian Petre Năsturel saw in it a political and religious manifesto, "*une affiche de propaganda*,"⁷⁵ which hinted at the image of Stephen the Great as an earthly bearer of victories. Moreover, Năsturel argued that the image of the three-headed dragon placed underneath the feet of the saint may be seen "as the most important enemies of Moldavia themselves,"⁷⁶ namely, the Ottomans.⁷⁷

Lastly, Stephen the Great is named "tsar" upon returning victoriously to his royal seat: the metropolitans and the priests blessed the "tsar" as he entered Suceava. An entire body of literature was dedicated to the imperial attributes of Stephen,⁷⁸ but what is interesting in this case is the fact that he was named "tsar" after he defeated the Ottoman Empire. Would he have been named as such if the battle had different opponents? Most likely not, which is why one cannot find any similar reference following any other victories against the Poles, the Hungarians, or the Wallachians. Stephen is "tsar" only after defeating the probably undefeatable, recalling the Ottoman Empire's reputation for strength.

These characterizations of the most important man in Moldavia, therefore, also give insight into how the enemy was perceived—he was the unseen opposite of Stephen. However, these subtle characterizations are balanced by more straightforward formulations. A number

ries" more than once: he was also so named when chronicles discussed the Battle of Râmnic, when Stephen faced a Wallachian-Ottoman army in 1481. See Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 447.

⁷⁴ Historians still debate the function of this embroidered work. While most historians believe it is a battle flag, others see it as a gonfalon or a podea. For more on the debates regarding its function, see Petre Năsturel, "Steagul 'de luptă' al lui Ștefan cel Mare" [The "banner" of Stephen the Great], *Analele Putnei* 1 (2005): 47–48.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Later on, Petre Năsturel started questioning the function of the embroidery as a battle flag, resulting in the article quoted above. See the full article: *ibid.*, 47–52.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Dumitru Năstase, "Ștefan cel Mare împărat" [Emperor Stephen the Great], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 1504–2004. Portret în istorie*, 568–69; Ștefan Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ștefan cel Mare. Tradiție diplomatică și vocabular politic" [The titles of Stephen the Great: Diplomatic tradition and political vocabulary], *Studies and Materials of Medieval History* 23 (2005): 41–78; Maria Magdalena Székely, "Atributele imperiale ale cetății Suceava" [Imperial attributes of the Suceava fortress], *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 5–14.

of stove tiles dated 1481–1490 were discovered in the royal house in Suceava.⁷⁹ The tiles present a narration that makes a parallel and presents the contrast between medieval Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. Based on these tiles, the narration of a now-lost literary creation has been reconstructed that relates the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Christianity, giving Moldavia an essential role in this conflict.⁸⁰

The tiles present contrasting groups of animals. There are exotic and fantastic animals (two parrots, a camel, an elephant, birds with long and strong claws with large open wings, a hippogriff [a bird with a human face]), which place the story in an Oriental and imaginary setting. At the same time, there are the more familiar forms such as a boar, a crowned crane, and a pelican that is tearing open its chest so that it can feed its young with its own blood. All these heraldic animals imply not simply Moldavia but specifically the Moldavian dynastic coat of arms.⁸¹

Apart from the contrasting animals, one may notice the contrasts between the humans: the young rider, a hunter dressed in Western clothes (representative of the Moldavians) and accompanied by a falcon, is juxtaposed with the impaled man, who can be identified as an Ottoman. At this point, the interpretation of the tiles becomes clear: the Ottoman Empire is an exotic jungle filled with strange animals. The Otherness of the Ottomans is highlighted through a contrast with the image of the hunter, who hunts among the wild animals of this peculiar setting. The hunter is aided by Christian symbolic attributes such as the aforementioned crowned crane or sacrificial pelican. This imagery brings with it an expected conclusion: the impaled Ottoman could only represent the symbolic and victorious chase of the Moldavian hunter over his enemy.⁸²

The ultimate goal of Stephen the Great, visible through all these representations of the Other, was to overcome the looming Ottoman threat. The same goals marked the reigns of his immediate followers, Bogdan III (1504–1517) and Stephen the Young (1517–1527), but to a lesser extent, as their reigns were strongly influenced by other factors. For Bogdan, it was

⁷⁹ Paraschiva Victoria Batariuc, *Cahle din Moldova medievală. Secolele XIV-XVII* [Tiles from medieval Moldavia: Fourteenth to seventeenth centuries] (Suceava: Istros, 1999), 179–80.

⁸⁰ Ovidiu Pecican, *Sânge și trandafiri. Cultură ero(t)ică în epoca ștefaniană* [Blood and roses: Heroic/erotic culture in the time of Stephen the Great] (Chișinău: Cartier, 2005), 156–60.

⁸¹ See this description of the animals in *ibid.*, 157–58.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 159.

his conflict with Poland, while for Stephen the Young, it was his internal conflict with his boyars and the Royal Council.⁸³ On the other hand, the reigns of Bogdan and Stephen can be seen as continuations of Stephen the Great's time, as they accorded with the views of their predecessor, leaving policies unchanged. Any representations of the Ottoman Other would have been similar to the ones already described. A shift in the representation of the Other occurred during the two reigns of Peter Rareș, when the Ottoman concern became central. The imagery of the Other in the time of Rareș was comparable to that of Stephen the Great's time, as Rareș developed and provided it with a more pronounced and visible meaning.

Peter Rareș: Liking and Disliking

Peter Rareș—referred to by his chronicler Macarie as the “swan with golden feathers”⁸⁴—was the illegitimate son of Stephen the Great. Ironically, he was also his father's most ambitious and committed follower. Stephen's anti-Ottoman policy was enthusiastically continued during Rareș's time (1527–1538; 1541–1546) in a good-versus-bad contrast scheme, or, as Macarie himself characterized Christian-Ottoman relations, in a “lightness and darkness medley.”⁸⁵

The royal seat's perception of the Ottoman Empire went through three different but circular stages: negative perception, positive perception, and negative perception again. As shall be seen, however, not all these perceptions were accurate, as some perceptions (especially the positive ones) were influenced by the political interests of the prince.

Stage 1: Negative perception

Following an initial period of experimentation, the artistic productions under Stephen the Great reached what art historians call the period of

⁸³ For relevant information on the reign of Bogdan III, see Gorovei, *Mușatinii*, 69–73; and Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 546–53. For Stephen the Young, see Gorovei, *Mușatinii*, 73–78; Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 553–57.

⁸⁴ “Cronica lui Macarie” [The chronicle of Macarie], in *Vechile cronici moldovenesci până la Urechia* [Old Moldavian chronicles until Urechia], ed. Ioan Bogdan (Bucharest: Li-to-Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1891), 212.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

maturity in Moldavian art.⁸⁶ The “Moldavian style in medieval architecture”⁸⁷ developed, and mural paintings also bloomed and became the most significant decorative elements of Stephen’s artistic legacy.⁸⁸

Following the example of his father, Peter Rareș used Stephen’s artistic patterns, but more importantly, he improved upon the already established forms. Peter revived and modernized Stephen’s artistic tradition; the most significant improvement was the introduction of a new technique of church exterior painting. As already shown by the examination of *The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross*, Stephen the Great used church iconography for more than its classical role of teaching the Bible through images. The iconography also warned people whom to fear. Learning from his father’s language of religious scenes, Peter Rareș, always aided by the bishop and chronicler Macarie,⁸⁹ went a few steps further: he developed Stephen’s artistic program and applied it to the exterior walls of the monasteries. These decorations not only supported the liturgical process but also could be interpreted as symbols of attitudes in sixteenth-century Moldavia.

There are four mural scenes that were painted on all exterior walls of the edifices commissioned during the reign of Peter.⁹⁰ They were repeated in an unchanged manner on each and every church. The three apses always (re)present the Celestial Hierarchy, a scene with a great number of characters arranged on several horizontal layers (usually six), introducing various groups of saints, angels, prophets, apostles, holy fathers, and

⁸⁶ Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 12.

⁸⁷ For a description of the Moldavian style, see *ibid.*

⁸⁸ For a thorough presentation of Stephen’s art, see Răzvan Theodorescu, “Arta ștefaniană între sumă și sinteză” [The art of Stephen between sum and synthesis], in *Comemorarea lui Ștefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte* [The commemoration of Stephen the Great 500 years after his death] (Bucharest: Academiei Române, 2004), 47–53.

⁸⁹ For details on the bishop and chronicler Macarie, see Sorin Ulea, “O surprinzătoare personalitate a evului mediu românesc: cronicarul Macarie” [A surprising personality of the Romanian Middle Ages: Chronicler Macarie], *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 32 (1985): 14–48.

⁹⁰ Peter Rareș and Bishop Macarie were behind the exterior painting of a significant number of churches and monasteries: Probota (1532); Humor (1535), with the best-preserved exterior murals; Moldovița (1537); Arbore (1541); Baia (1535–1538); Saint George of Suceava (1534); Saint George of Hârlău (1530); Coșula (1536–1538); Râșca (1551–1552); Voroneț (1547); and most likely Dobrovăț and Bălinești, which are yet to be dated.

martyrs.⁹¹ Furthermore, either the northern or the southern façade bears the Akathistos Hymn, accompanied by the representation of the Siege of Constantinople,⁹² while the Tree of Jesse⁹³ appears on the opposite façade. The fourth grand theme is that of the Last Judgment,⁹⁴ almost always present on the western wall. Analyzing these scenes, one may observe that Peter continually circulated his political messages through isolated scenes such as the *Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross*, but he also went outside his buildings and had large messages placed all over the walls, from the apses to the narthex. What is striking about all of these walls is that their iconography hides an anti-Ottoman manifesto beneath its theological and liturgical purpose. Sorin Ulea was the first art historian to formulate such a hypothesis, but others have supported and reaffirmed his opinion as well.⁹⁵ While it is rather difficult to see clear anti-Ottoman imagery in the *Tree of Jesse* scene,⁹⁶ the three other exterior scenes contain elements that reflect Rareș's political ideals.

While the *Akathistos Hymn* is frequently represented in church iconography, the Moldavian *Akathistos* is the only one that contains an additional scene: the Siege of Constantinople, best preserved at the Moldovița monastery (Fig. 3). The scene is a metaphorical representation of a besieged Constantinople, which, with the divine help of the Holy Virgin, withstands its assaulters. It is usually identified with the Persian siege of Constantinople from 626. However, two details appear to set the battle and the

⁹¹ For a presentation of the scene of the Celestial Hierarchy from Humor, one of the best-preserved such scenes, see Vasile Drăguț, Vasile Florea, Dan Grigorescu, and Marin Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini* [Romanian painting in images] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970), 62.

⁹² The Akathistos hymn, probably written sometime after the Persian siege of Constantinople in 626, inspired the iconography of the Akathistos murals. See Egon Wellesz, "The Akathistos: A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9 (1956): 141–74.

⁹³ For the origins and model that inspired the Moldavian Tree of Jesse, see Michael D. Taylor, "A Historiated Tree of Jesse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34 (1980–1981): 125–76.

⁹⁴ For a presentation of the most famous exterior painting of the time of Rareș, the *Last Judgment* from the Voroneț monastery, see Vasile Drăguț et al., *Pictura românească în imagini*, 71–72.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Vasile Drăguț, in two of his books quoted in this article: *Pictura murală din Moldova* and *Pictura românească în imagini*.

⁹⁶ Sorin Ulea argued that the scene does have an anti-Ottoman message, as it was a representation of a prayer to Christ, supporting the other three scenes in their plea for divine help against the sultan's empire. See Sorin Ulea, "Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești I," 88.



Fig. 3: The Siege of Constantinople, Moldovița Monastery
(photo credit: Teodora C. Artimon)

siege not in Byzantine territory but rather on Moldavian lands. First, the besiegers are dressed in Ottoman clothing and use cannons to breach the walls.⁹⁷ Second, the fortress is defended by a rider who is attacking his enemies while wearing typical fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Moldavian clothing.⁹⁸ Given these details, the fortress cannot be identified with the Constantinople of 626 but instead should be identified with Suceava, represented in a moment of military success over the Ottomans.

While the focal point in the *Akathistos Hymn* is the Siege of Constantinople, the focus in the *Last Judgment* is the group of the damned (Fig. 4). Characterized as the “real psychological center of the composition,”⁹⁹ the two groups represented by the Ottomans and the Tartars within the entire group of the damned seem highly individualized. Compared to the other groups of the Armenians, Latins, and Jews, they are not merely faces with similar physiognomy but true individualized portraits. This individualization was the actual “mirroring of the anti-Ottoman feelings of the masses.”¹⁰⁰

The Celestial Hierarchy (Fig. 5) is a saints’ procession, divided, upon the three church apses, into several rows comprised of different groups of holy people. The procession portrays the classical prayer scene of *Deisis* in which Christ, flanked by the Holy Mother and John the Baptist, appears

⁹⁷ Ștefan Andreescu, “Pătrăuți și Arezzo: O comparație și consecințele ei” [Pătrăuți and Arezzo: A comparison and its consequences], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al Credinței Creștine*, 386.

⁹⁸ Sorin Ulea, “Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești I,” 72.

⁹⁹ Vasile Drăguț et al., *Pictura românească în imagini*, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Sorin Ulea, “Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești I,” 78.



Fig. 4: The Last Judgment (detail—group of the damned), Voroneț Monastery
(photo credit: Teodora C. Artimon)

in the middle of the central apse. While Sorin Ulea's interpretation might be somewhat far-fetched, he offers a unique explanation for the Celestial Hierarchy. Connecting the scene with the *Last Judgment* and the *Akathistos Hymn*, the scholar argued that it was an "explicit iconographic replay and transposition"¹⁰¹ of the anti-Ottoman prayer suggested jointly by the *Siege of Constantinople*, the *Akathistos Hymn*, and the *Last Judgment*. Thus, taking all three scenes as a grand prayer for the Moldavian cause, Ulea argued that Peter was well aware of the images' persuasive power. Furthermore, a call for war against the present enemies of Moldavia appears in the lowest register, closest to the eye, which consists largely of military saints. The military saints indicate, metonymically, the state of war in Moldavia at the time.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 84.

¹⁰² For more on the rhetorical figures employed in these scenes and on how metonymy was used to suggest the concept of war in the *Celestial Hierarchy*, see Teodora Artimon, "A New Approach to the Moldavian Exterior Wall Painting Using Visual Rhetoric," in *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, vol. 17, ed. Alice M. Choyke and Daniel Ziemann (Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2011), 81–99.



Fig. 5: Celestial Hierarchy (southern and central apses), Moldovița Monastery (photo credit: Teodora C. Artimon)

All these representations, beginning with the realistic portrait of the Ottomans in the *Last Judgment* scene, show how the Ottomans were perceived. They were the “undefeatable,”¹⁰³ as Peter himself referred to Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and his empire, whom the Moldavians hoped to defeat at an undetermined point in the future.

Stage 2: Positive perception

Almost all these representations in exterior monastic iconography were painted during Peter Rareș’s first reign and should be considered in the larger context of the prince’s desire for independence from neighboring powers. During his first period on the throne of Moldavia, Peter tried to accomplish more than he physically and politically could: he tried to gain Moldavia’s independence from both the Ottoman Empire and the

¹⁰³ In a letter written in 1541 by Peter Rareș to Toma Boldorffer, boyar in Bistrița. See *Scrisori domnești* [Royal letters], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia Neamul Românesc, 1912), letter no. XXVI, 57.

Kingdom of Poland. While he managed to do so with Poland's Sigismund, he failed against Suleyman the Magnificent.¹⁰⁴

As a consequence of Rareș's unsteadiness and mismatched diplomatic strategies, King Sigismund signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire, which led to Moldavia's isolation and to Peter Rareș's eventual dismissal.¹⁰⁵ Peter committed a fatal mistake that his father never did: he rose against almost all neighboring powers and thus was attacked in 1538 simultaneously by the Ottoman army led by Suleyman himself from the south, by the Polish from the north, and by the Tartars from the east.¹⁰⁶ Thus the prince had no other choice but to flee to Transylvania, to Ciceu fortress. Following this defeat, Suleyman appointed a new prince in Moldavia, but Peter soon started to prepare a return to the Moldavian throne.

In 1539, Rareș approached Suleyman for the first time, and shortly afterwards, in 1540, he left the Ciceu fortress for Istanbul.¹⁰⁷ Suleyman accepted Rareș's plea for the throne for two reasons: first, because Rareș paid an indemnity to the sultan, and second, because the boyars had illegally invested, without the sultan's permission, a new Moldavian prince.¹⁰⁸ Hence Rareș returned to Moldavia, despite the Moldavian boyars' lamentations that "he brought only evil upon himself and our Christian country."¹⁰⁹

Peter's (re)presentation of the Ottoman Empire and of Suleyman now changed drastically. It is no surprise, however, that the prince now saw good in the sultan, because he had been able to return Rareș to power. There is a significant contrast between the descriptions of the Ottomans during the first reign and the descriptions from Peter's period of exile. During the first reign, he not only carried out massive anti-Ottoman propaganda through exterior iconography, but the chronicle he commissioned from Macarie, as well as some of his letters, explicitly referred to the Ottoman people in negative terms. Before and especially during 1538, he used the harshest words to describe the "damned ruler Suleyman,"¹¹⁰ who

¹⁰⁴ See Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 562.

¹⁰⁵ For a thorough description of these events, see Constantin Ibid., 563–67.

¹⁰⁶ "Next to the Turks came the Tartars as well, with their beastly faces, and next to the Turks came the leaders of the Wallachian armies too, and from the north [came] the low-minded Poles." See "Cronica lui Macarie," 207.

¹⁰⁷ Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 566.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 567.

¹⁰⁹ *Scrisori de boieri. Scrisori de domni* [Letters from boyars: Letters from rulers], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Vălenii de Munte: Datina Românească, 1925), letter no. XIV, 25.

¹¹⁰ "Cronica lui Macarie," 202.

was “just like a bird with large wings who binds to itself smaller birds,”¹¹¹ and his “brute and evil”¹¹² men, who attack like “wild goats.”¹¹³ Presenting the invasion of 1538, Macarie described how

the emperor lost no time, and blowing just like a sharp wind from the east and like a howling thunderstorm, he rose with his leonine roar, taking with him [towards Moldavia] a crowd of beasts.¹¹⁴

However, once Peter Rareș lost his throne, the Ottomans were suddenly “transformed” into merciful people, and their sultan became full of kindness. The chronicle of Macarie tells how Peter exiled himself at the Ciceu fortress, and how the prince asked for the sultan’s “most powerful”¹¹⁵ help:

The proud emperor of the Turks, hearing about this and seeing what had happened, felt pity for Prince Peter and ordered Prince János to let him go. . . .¹¹⁶ Even the barbaric Turk felt sorry for the suffering prince, and he called him in order to invest him as prince again.¹¹⁷

The chronicler continues with a description of Istanbul and Peter’s stay there:

And after he entered the most beautiful imperial city of Constantinople and once he was within its reinforced walls, he immediately went before the great emperor and he unexpectedly tamed the soul of the barbarian. He looked at the prince with human compassion and allowed him to take his deserved rest.¹¹⁸

This last quote from Macarie says the most about the perception of Ottomans in Moldavia: the soul of the barbarian was finally tamed, and most

¹¹¹ Ibid., 207.

¹¹² Ibid., 208.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 207.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 210.

¹¹⁶ John Szapolyai (Zápolya), the ruler of Transylvania, who had the power to decide whether Peter would stay in Transylvania.

¹¹⁷ “Cronica lui Macarie,” 210.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

strikingly, the sultan looked at Peter with “human compassion,” thus suggesting that previously, the ruler could not see anyone with appropriate “human” feelings or even that the sultan did not usually have natural human feelings; in Moldavian eyes, he was inhuman.

A similarly softened representation of the Ottomans is visible in the letters that Rareș sent while staying at the sultan’s court. The letters reveal that the prince trusted Suleyman while highlighting, just as Macarie did, the good terms on which he was welcomed to Istanbul:

You should know that I am in Constantinople, in good health, thank God, and well received by His Imperial Majesty and viziers and kept in honor: I do not lack anything, thank God. . . . I trust in God and in His Imperial Majesty that the situation will change soon.¹¹⁹

The Moldavian prince was, however, in even greater awe when he returned to his much-desired throne: “the undefeated emperor, our greatly merciful lord, and the greatly enlightened viziers, our gracious lords, gave us back Moldavia, our country, exactly as I had it before”¹²⁰

Stage 3: Negative perception

Peter Rareș played his cards right by showing good will towards the Ottoman Empire. He knew well how to guard his interests and make himself one of the sultan’s men again. This fact is visible not only in the communication between Suleyman and Sigismund,¹²¹ in which the new positive relations between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire are emphasized, but also in a letter from a man named Husein, a messenger of the

¹¹⁹ *Scrisori domnești* [Letters from rulers], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Vălenii de Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1912), letter no. XXV, 55.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, letter no. XXVI, 56.

¹²¹ See a number of letters between Suleyman and Sigismund in which the sultan announced the second enthronement of Peter, as well as Sigismund’s acceptance of the situation. See, for example, Sigismund’s letter to the sultan of April 20, 1541, and Suleyman’s letter to the Polish king from the beginning of 1541 in *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea* [Documents regarding the history of Romania collected from Polish archives: Sixteenth century], ed. Ilie Corfuș (Bucharest: Academiei RPR, 1979), letters no. 27 and 28, 34–36.

sultan to the Polish king. Husein strongly advised Sigismund to keep good relations with Peter because "the sultan has shown him [Rareș] such a great honor that he has not shown anyone in a long time."¹²² However, despite the sultan's optimism, Mehmed bin Mehmed's description of the 1538 events still seemed to be valid for Peter's second reign: "he was subdued only in appearance, and in fact he was a rebel."¹²³

Following the anti-Ottoman policy so resolutely pursued by his father, at the risk of violating the treaty with the Ottoman Empire, Peter soon demonstrated that he was still in the "anti-Ottoman" camp. In 1544, upon learning that Joachim II Hector of Brandenburg was about to initiate an anti-Ottoman campaign, he hurried to promise Joachim II all his help, including money and animals, as well as the commitment of betraying the sultan to the Christians. Peter's messenger said that "he [Rareș] wants to stay with the Christians and believes that he can help them more than others can."¹²⁴ Even earlier, in 1542, Nicholas the Armenian, upon passing through Moldavia, recorded Rareș's words about his Ottoman policy: "... if I saw that a Christian king rose with power and faith against the Turks, I would join him with faith and help him with all my powers."¹²⁵

It is interesting, however, that this third stage did not show only explicitly negative representations of the Ottomans. It was a gray zone in which negative views towards the Empire were held but could not be openly expressed. The iconography of the Arbore Monastery best exemplifies this gray zone. As already mentioned, most of the exterior iconography of Moldavian monasteries was conceived during Peter's first reign. Arbore monastery was painted in 1541,¹²⁶ shortly after the prince's return from Istanbul and reinvestment. Its iconography immediately showed the change in representation between the first and the second reigns. The first major modification appears in the scene of the *Siege of Constantinople*: the Arbore representation lacks both the Ottomans with their cannons and the

¹²² Ibid., letter no. 29, 37.

¹²³ The chronicle of Mehmed bin Mehmed, "Nuhnet-ut-Tevarih ve'l-ahbar," in *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române* [Turkish chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities], vol. 1, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest: Academiei RPR, 1966), 411.

¹²⁴ *Scrisori domnești*, letter no. XXVII, 59.

¹²⁵ *Călători străini despre Țările Române* [Foreign travelers about the Romanian Principalities], vol. 1, ed. Maria Holban (Bucharest: Științifică, 1968), 387.

¹²⁶ Vasile Drăguț, *Dicționar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească*, 22.

Moldavian rider, which both place the setting in Moldavia. This depiction is clearly that of the 626 Persian siege of Constantinople, as an inscription above the scene reinforces. However, although the anti-Ottoman significance of this scene disappeared at Arbore, a new meaningful scene reappeared and replaced its message: the *Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross*. As already explained, the *Mounted Procession* appeared only once before, in a church commissioned by Stephen the Great, representing fifteenth-century opposition to the Ottoman Empire. The replacement of symbolism in the *Siege of Constantinople* with the *Mounted Procession* can mean only one thing: this change was imposed by the necessities of the moment and that, in fact, anti-Ottoman feeling persisted. The replacement merely indicated the need to represent anti-Ottoman attitudes discreetly. Hence the *Mounted Procession* was painted on the inside of the church, rather than on the outside, in order to make the message less evident¹²⁷—or more nuanced.

Peter Rareș thus built up an ambiguous image of the Ottomans, although his true perception of the sultan and his empire is visible even in an ostensibly positive representation. It is important, however, to note the way Peter molded the image of the Ottomans in order to aid his political interests, and in this way he created a “gray zone” of representation.

Elijah and Stephen Rareș: The Anomalies

A superficial comparison of the reign of Peter with those of his sons Elijah and Stephen would suggest that the sons were anomalies. While Rareș was a prince with strong ideals, fully able to fulfill his goals, Elijah and his younger brother Stephen seem always to have deviated from what both Stephen the Great and Peter Rareș regarded as essential for their reigns: territorial integrity, independence, and upholding Christian and Byzantine precepts.¹²⁸ Ignoring the legacy of their father and grandfather, one

¹²⁷ Sorin Ulea, “L’origine et la signification idéologique de la peinture extérieure moldave (I),” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 2 (1963): 49–51. See a discussion of the same issue in Ștefan Andreescu, “Pătrăuți și Arezzo,” 386–88.

¹²⁸ For more on Stephen the Great’s “recipe” for what made an ideal Moldavian ruler, see Benoît Joudiou, “Le règne d’Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique,” in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al Credinței Creștine*, 415–29.

of them converted to Islam, while the other one, conversely, started a mass persecution of non-Christians in Moldavia.

Elijah Rareș/Mehmed Bey

The eldest son of Peter Rareș, Iliaș/Elijah (1546–1551), took the throne in Suceava soon after the death of his father, with the immediate approval of the sultan.¹²⁹ Although he “ruled over all his subjects with goodness and with the greatest wisdom and care, but also with gentleness,”¹³⁰ he did something that shocked Moldavia to its core. While in Istanbul, on Saturday, May 30, 1551, the prince abandoned his Christian faith and embraced Islam under the name Mehmed, receiving the office of *sanjak-bey* of Silistra,¹³¹ on the southern bank of the lower Danube.

The reasons for Elijah’s conversion remain uncertain even today. What were the circumstances that led to this conversion? Was it done willingly? While internal sources refer to it unambiguously as a premeditated act, external sources reveal more complexity and a second possible scenario: Elijah arrived in Istanbul loaded with gifts—horses, money, brocades, fine silk—and asked the sultan to give him five hundred janissaries to take with him to Moldavia in order to help him regain some of his lost Transylvanian fortresses.¹³² The plea to supplement his army with janissaries leads to one logical conclusion: Elijah intended to return to Moldavia. Most relevant, however, for the perception and representation of the Ottomans during the reign of Elijah is the prince’s life before his conversion.

Elijah had embraced the “Ottoman lifestyle” from the very beginning of his reign. Sent by his father to Constantinople as a guarantee for his

¹²⁹ “Peter Voivode, the father of Iliaș, is now dead, and his eldest son [Iliaș] is now ruler of Moldavia in his place, being recognized by the Ottoman emperor.” See *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, document no. 61, 124.

¹³⁰ Sixteenth-century anonymous description of Moldavia. See *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 1, 200.

¹³¹ Nagy Pienaru, “Un act otoman privitor la convertirea voievodului Iliaș (30 mai 1551)” [An Ottoman document concerning Prince Iliaș’s conversion to Islam (May 30, 1551)], *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 101.

¹³² Giovanni Maria Malvezzi, the ambassador of the Habsburgs to the Ottoman Empire, reported on all these issues. See Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 594.

fidelity to the Ottoman Empire, Elijah spent about a year and four months there¹³³ and returned to Moldavia shortly before Peter died.¹³⁴ Most likely, the Ottoman lifestyle impressed him and he consequently brought it to his court in Suceava. No Moldavian sources describe the “Ottoman way of life” directly, but one source presents in detail the small Ottoman enclave that arose in Suceava during the time of Elijah: the Chronicle of Eftimie, a contemporary of Elijah who wrote his text a few years after Elijah’s reign.¹³⁵ When we examine the presentation of this Ottoman-ruled territory in a Christian land, a thoroughly elaborated image of the Ottoman Other emerges.

Before looking at the text, it should be emphasized that Eftimie was not entirely biased when he wrote his chronicle. As a bishop¹³⁶ and as a chronicler commissioned by Prince Alexander Lăpușneanul, Eftimie could not have remained impartial when telling the story of Elijah; his recounting of some elements of the prince’s “Ottoman” court and behavior were surely exaggerated. Nevertheless, the court did exist, and regardless of the author’s known biases, its description is pertinent.

The description of Elijah’s reign begins in fairly positive terms, showing the kind and loving side of the prince, who was good and righteous towards his boyars and those surrounding him. The tone of the chronicle then abruptly changes and opens with a description that would demonstrate how Elijah was bound to an Ottoman lifestyle before actually becoming a subject of the Ottoman Empire. At this stage of the description, Eftimie offers a specific reason for Elijah’s misconduct: “an illness was

¹³³ There was confusion regarding the time he spent in Istanbul. It was initially believed that Elijah was sent to the sultan in 1542, when in fact, a different son of Peter Rareș was sent: Alexander. Only after Alexander died in Istanbul was Elijah sent, and he remained there for almost a year and a half. See Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 589. For this same subject, see also Constantin Rezachevici, “Petru Rareș între sultan și lumea creștină în 1541–1542, după noi izvoare polone – Solia hatmanului Petru Vartic din 1542” [Peter Rareș between the sultan and the Christian world in 1541–1542, based on new Polish sources: The mission of Petru Vartic from 1542], *Revista Istorică* new series 5 (1990): 442–43.

¹³⁴ Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 589.

¹³⁵ The Chronicle of Elijah is the continuation of Peter Rareș’s official chronicle written by Macarie and was written under and commissioned by Prince Alexander Lăpușneanul. See Ștefan Ciobanu, *Istoria literaturii române vechi* [The history of old Romanian literature] (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1989), 287.

¹³⁶ Eftimie was most likely the Bishop of Rădăuți. See *ibid*.

starting to grow in the bottom of his heart.”¹³⁷ Following this statement, the chronicler makes a comparison between what is Moldavian/Christian and what is Other: the prince is said to have abandoned the righteous faith for the evil faith.¹³⁸

The actual description of the court follows, with insights into its daily life. To the exasperation of the chronicler, who was an eyewitness to the events, Elijah seems to have brought to Suceava many people from the Ottoman Empire, from friends to counselors and preachers, whom Eftimie refers to as “damned Turks.”¹³⁹ The most prominent of these people was a man named Hadâr, whose precise role at the court of Elijah remains unknown. He must have been one of the highest-ranked Ottoman representatives in Moldavia, as he is the only one named in the chronicle. Hadâr was one of the prince’s closest men: they not only spent their time together, but they also seem to have lived together.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Hadâr must have been a type of personal adviser, an imam, a preacher, as the chronicler highlights that Elijah was “listening to his bitter teachings.”¹⁴¹ The Moldavian prince was therefore learning not only from Hadâr’s Islamic teachings, but also from the Ottoman lifestyle.

Naturally, Eftimie and the Moldavian boyars were outraged by these events, resulting in resentful descriptions of the Ottoman who was influencing their prince: Hadâr was “the most deceitful and evil man because of his demonic teachings and his witchery . . . perverted by his actions, but even more perverted by his soul.”¹⁴² Under the influence of his Ottoman adviser, Elijah became more committed to Ottoman ways: he stopped eating pork and drinking wine. This strange (from the Moldavian perspective) behavior is emphasized by the label given Elijah when describing his eating preferences: “the shameless.”¹⁴³ Elijah’s new habits went further:

¹³⁷ This simple statement illustrates a general (Moldavian) stereotype of the Ottomans and, more pointedly, of Islam: it was regarded as an illness, an unhealthy and unnatural “infection.” “Cronica lui Eftimie” [The Chronicle of Eftimie], in *Vechile cronici moldovenesci până la Urechia*, 214.

¹³⁸ “Thus he abandoned the rightful faith for the evil faith, doing right for wiliness and wickedness, and he started to strongly believe in and keep the Turkish law and its deceitful teachings.” See *ibid.*

¹³⁹ “He made some damned Turks his friends and counselors and teachers,” *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ “With this man Prince Elijah spent his time, and they even lived together,” *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 215.

while he stopped eating pork, he continued eating meat on Christian feasts, as well as on Wednesdays and Fridays, when, according to Orthodox tradition, he was not allowed to eat meat. Eftimie certainly saw this as a way of “insulting our true faith,”¹⁴⁴ and Elijah also “hated the priests and the deacons, [and] he called the monks enemies and demons.”¹⁴⁵ More importantly, the prince became something of an iconoclast, accepting the Muslim ban on the painting of human figures; he regarded all icons as expressions of idolatry.¹⁴⁶

The violent clash of ideologies, although exaggerated by the chronicler, is evident in these few lines. The chasm between the two opposing sides is dug even deeper by Eftimie as he explains that “he [Elijah] bought filthy whores with many thousands of akçe and golden coins.”¹⁴⁷ In other words, the prince had a harem at his court in Suceava. A later chronicle, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, also mentions this harem: “Having next to him young Turkish counselors with whom he spent the day and enjoyed himself, and fornicating by night with Turkish women, he shifted away from Christian customs.”¹⁴⁸ There was more, however. Apart from adopting Ottoman eating habits, learning Islamic teachings, keeping a harem, and spending his days with his foreign counselors, there was another intriguing aspect that Eftimie noticed but which he only briefly mentioned. Hadâr was interested in birds, which was yet another exotic pastime from the Moldavian point of view.¹⁴⁹

Eftimie evidently believed that the prince’s youth and innocence allowed him to be “dragged into the abyss of loss.”¹⁵⁰ Moreover, the chronicler emphasized that all of Elijah’s misconduct occurred under the influence of Hadâr, thus trying to explain what he regarded as unthinkable.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ “. . . the holy icons, the face of Christ and of the Holy Mother of God and of all the saints, he called idols.” Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Grigore Ureche, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei* [The chronicle of Moldavia], ed. Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest: Gramar, 2009), 103.

¹⁴⁹ On the Ottoman preoccupation with animals, especially birds, as seen in Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq’s letters concerning the Ottoman Empire, see Hasan Güneş and Nadide Güneş, “A Nation Having Internalized Love for Animals, the Ottomans,” *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Science* 6 (2012): 59–66, esp. 60–63.

¹⁵⁰ “Cronica lui Eftimie,” 215.

¹⁵¹ The fact that all these acts were seen as unthinkable is demonstrated by Eftimie’s statement that “he seemed to be under a spell . . .” See *ibid.*, 217.

The chronicler Eftimie thus had a negative perception of what was happening at the court of the Moldavian prince. A similar description of a different Ottoman or Ottoman-influenced court would have most likely not included all the resentful and malicious comments Eftimie made about the Ottomans living in Suceava. Another account might instead have expressed amazement about the unfamiliarity of the Ottoman world.¹⁵² Eftimie's chronicle, which was written in the context of a Christian prince embracing Islam and bringing Ottoman customs to his Christian court, was another matter. In Eftimie's biased view, sixteenth-century Moldavians regarded their archenemies as heretics,¹⁵³ unbelievers, men of the devil, and strange people with even stranger habits, thus repeating medieval and contemporary stereotypes.

Stephen Rareș

Elijah Rareș brought Ottoman style and fashion to the Moldavian court. It should be noted, however, that this simply followed the general pattern of the spread of Oriental fashion, which also occurred in sixteenth-century Poland and Hungary.¹⁵⁴ While Elijah's brother, Stephen, seemed to have been displeased with this fashion and ordered the Moldavians to stop wearing Ottoman-inspired clothes,¹⁵⁵ he still kept at his court a Christianized Ottoman, Trifu Hamza, who had been a member of the Royal Council since the reign of Peter Rareș.¹⁵⁶ Thus it is certain that, although Stephen tried to disguise his acceptance of an Ottoman presence in Moldavia, he tolerated it. Moreover, the chronicler Eftimie, criticizing Stephen's reign

¹⁵² See, for example, some descriptions that lack the vengefulness and viciousness of Eftimie's chronicle in the letters written by Busbecq on his travels to the Ottoman Empire: *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

¹⁵³ "... all these unlawful heretic acts. ..." See "Cronica lui Eftimie," 215.

¹⁵⁴ Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 606.

¹⁵⁵ Ioan Bogdan, "Evangheliile de la Humor și Voroneț din 1473 și 1551" [The gospels of Humor and Voroneț from 1473 and 1551], *Analele Academiei Române* (1907), 654. Rezachevici also quoted Ioan Bogdan on this issue: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 606.

¹⁵⁶ Constantin Rezachevici, "Politica internă" [The internal policy], in *Petru Rareș*, ed. Leon Șimanschi (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RPR, 1978), 217, 220.

as he did his brother's, suggested that Ottoman advisers, as well as the harem, remained at Stephen's court.¹⁵⁷

Stephen Rareș was likewise a controversial ruler. While his contemporaries described him both positively and negatively,¹⁵⁸ modern historiography mainly discusses his persecutions against non-Christians.¹⁵⁹ From the second day of his reign,¹⁶⁰ he began persecuting mainly Armenians but also Ottomans, Hungarians, and non-Christians generally. Certainly, the anti-Ottoman persecution and its undertaking is of interest here. A 1556 Armenian chronicle reveals that Stephen was persecuting Armenian and Ottoman merchants.¹⁶¹ The Ottoman merchants, as the document indicates, were in fact Jews under Ottoman rule. Such persecutions of merchants from the Ottoman Empire, however, were not uncommon: Stephen the Great carried out similar persecutions during the fifteenth century, as did Alexander Lăpușneanul in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹⁶²

There was, in this respect, relatively long-term anti-Ottoman and anti-Armenian persecution that continued for roughly a century. There are no detailed descriptions of these persecutions, but one of the most relevant sources that describe the anti-Ottoman reaction in Stephen Rareș's Moldavia is the testimony of an anonymous Szekler who traveled to Moldavia and who witnessed the Ottoman persecutions in 1552. He recalled the words of a Moldavian who was explaining the prince's attitude towards the Ottomans found on Moldavian territory:

¹⁵⁷ "... he also brought Turkish whores and teachers ..." in "Cronica lui Eftimie," 217.

¹⁵⁸ Bishop Macarie, along with his disciple Azarie, presented him in positive terms, as they were in close and positive relations with Prince Stephen. On the other side, Eftimie (who was commissioned to write his chronicle by Stephen's rival, Alexander Lăpușneanul) presented him negatively. See Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 604–5.

¹⁵⁹ See a short presentation of this historiography in *ibid.*, 605.

¹⁶⁰ Ștefan Andreescu, "Presiune otomană și reacție ortodoxă în Moldova urmașilor lui Petru vodă Rareș" [Ottoman pressure and Orthodox reaction in Moldavia in the time of Prince Peter Rareș's descendants], *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 44.

¹⁶¹ See the discussion of this document in M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *Prigoana armenilor din Moldova sub domnia lui Ștefan Rareș (1551–1556)* [The persecution of Armenians in Stephen Rareș's Moldavia, 1551–1556], *Ararat New Series* 13 (2002).

¹⁶² For more on these persecutions, see Ștefan Andreescu, "Presiune otomană și reacție ortodoxă," 45–46.

. . . our prince ordered that wherever Turks may be found in his country, they be slaughtered, and killed, and have their bodies thrown in water; and the same man recalled that there were some Turkish merchants who arrived in Moldavia, about eighty, who were going towards Suceava, and the prince ordered that they all be killed and all their goods confiscated. I myself saw some of the horses that were taken from them as some of them were captured alive and taken to the prison of the Neamț fortress . . . and they were killed shortly afterwards, and their bodies thrown in the furnace.¹⁶³

This testimony gives a feel for the perception of Ottomans in the time of Stephen Rareș, which was certainly similar to perceptions during the previous sixteenth-century Moldavian reigns. These (anti-)Ottoman feelings, as well as the (anti-)Ottoman policies, were more or less constant all throughout the second half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century (including Elijah Rareș's reign).¹⁶⁴ The Moldavian princes inaugurated a policy that implied maintaining seemingly positive relations with the Porte, while seeking alliances with Western Christian rulers for anti-Ottoman purposes and even offensives.¹⁶⁵

From One Stephen to Another: A Century of Mixed Representations

Stephen the Great is considered the most noteworthy and influential personality of the Moldavian Middle Ages.¹⁶⁶ He became a model for his

¹⁶³ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 1, 100.

¹⁶⁴ Given the theory that Elijah did not, in fact, wish to embrace Islam but that political maneuvering forced him to do so, it is worth noting that he continued the policy of his father by maintaining seemingly good relations with the Ottoman Porte while looking for possibilities to rise up against the powerful sultan. See Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor*, 590.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 605.

¹⁶⁶ See a few selected works on this issue: Petre P. Panaitescu, "Ștefan cel Mare. O încercare de caracterizare" [Stephen the Great: An attempt at his characterization], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 1504–2004. Portret în istorie*, 12–32; Ștefan S. Gorovei, "Ștefan cel Mare" [Stephen the Great], in *ibid.*, 556–60; D. Ciurea, "Ștefan cel Mare – marele european" [Stephen the Great: The great European], in *ibid.*, 560–68; Dumitru Năstase, "Ștefan cel Mare împărat" [Emperor Stephen the Great], in *ibid.*, 568–611; Székely, "Le monarque idéal dans l'imaginaire médiéval" 283–302. Also, for the mythical dimension of Stephen the Great, see Ovidiu Ivancu, "Romanian National

followers, and, in fact, Stephen arguably conceived a “dynastic project” that was passed on to his successors.¹⁶⁷ The ruler who followed Stephen the Great most consistently in political strategy and cultural growth was unquestionably Peter Rareș.¹⁶⁸ A comparison between the perception of Ottomans in Stephen the Great’s and Peter Rareș’s practices is thus natural, and an additional analysis of Rareș’s two sons’ perceptions deepens our understanding of the Ottoman Other in Moldavia.

The preoccupation with the Ottoman threat truly emerged with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, only three years before Stephen the Great became the prince of Moldavia. It is therefore understandable why Stephen’s reign was marked by the relationships with the Ottoman Empire, from its beginning to its very end, and why he was constantly concerned with Moldavia’s territorial integrity and independence. Stephen was not overt in his strategies to encourage anti-Ottoman struggles. He instead discreetly represented his hopes of Ottoman defeat in mural scenes such as the *Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross*. His commissioned chronicles were just as distinct, and although they aimed at showing the spiritual superiority of the Moldavians, they tended to do so in a less opulent way than the chronicles of the Rareș family.

The difference between Stephen the Great and his son Peter becomes evident at this point. While they both dreamed of an Ottoman defeat, Stephen expressed these desires in more prudent and calculated ways, while Peter often presented them in a way that reflected his explosive personality.¹⁶⁹ The imposing exterior church painting is a proof of this and of

Heroes: An Interdisciplinary Approach,” *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Philologica* 11 (2010): 153–64. For the saintly dimension of Stephen, see Bishop Adrian Botoșăneanu, “Ștefan cel Mare în evlavia moldovenilor” [Stephen the Great in the piety of the Moldavians], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 1504–2004. Biserica – O lecție de istorie* [Stephen the Great and the Saint 1504–2004: The Church—A history lesson] (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2004), 38–42.

¹⁶⁷ See the elements of the dynastic project in Benoît Joudiou, “Le règne d’Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique,” 415–49.

¹⁶⁸ For information regarding the continuity of Stephen the Great’s ideals during the reign of Peter Rareș, see Veniamin Ciobanu, “Apărător al moștenirii lui Ștefan cel Mare” [The guardian of Stephen the Great’s legacy], in *Petru Rareș*, 109–36; and Ion Solcanu, “Realizări artistice” [Artistic endeavors], in *ibid.*, 292–318.

¹⁶⁹ For the personality of Peter, see Leon Șimanschi, “Personalitatea domnului” [The personality of the prince], in *Petru Rareș*, 318–23.

Peter's belief¹⁷⁰ that a grand Christian prayer expressed in such an impressive way could help the Moldavians in their imminent clash with the Porte. Because of the political circumstances, Peter's method of expressing his anti-Ottoman feelings changed during his second reign: he realized that in order to maintain his throne, he had to preserve the appearance of good terms with the sultan. His sons Elijah and Stephen Rareș applied similar policies, although with far more subtlety. What happened during the reigns of Rareș's two sons, and why were they so controversial? Why did they grow so distant from Stephen the Great's "dynastic project"?

There may be a range of reasons, starting with those already discussed in this article and ending with more unconventional ones, such as the emotional traumas the two children endured in 1538, when their father was dethroned and they were forced to flee and remain in exile in Transylvania for three years.¹⁷¹ However, without the existence of proper sources, all such possible reasons are merely suppositions. What can be highlighted here, however, with regard to the reigns of Peter's sons is that they influenced the perception of Ottomans in Moldavia—or at least they helped shape its representation in sources, especially in Eftimie's description of Elijah's Ottoman-inspired court. Without taking into account such representations, one cannot fully understand the dimension of Moldavian views of the Ottomans.

Analyzing the Moldavian external political situation and the relationship with the Ottoman Empire throughout this one century that unfolded between the two Stephens, one sees an increase in Ottoman pressure, the catalyst for which was the 1538 dethronement of Peter Rareș following the Ottoman expedition in Moldavia.¹⁷² The dethronement of Peter also

¹⁷⁰ This belief was held not only by Peter but also by his closest adviser Bishop Macarie, who was a veritable engine in the creation of this iconography, and certainly by his closest counselors, who were involved in these commissions.

¹⁷¹ The only way to prove such a statement is by applying psychoanalytical insights to the three-year period of exile. Elijah and Stephen's early childhood was marked by the Ottoman attack on Moldavia, which led to its loss of independence and fall under Ottoman suzerainty. However, using such a methodology is risky and, without the proper sources, may lead to misinterpretation. For an insight on how psychoanalysis may be used properly in historical contexts, see Peter Gay, "Psychoanalysis in History," in *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, ed. William McKinley Runyan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107–21.

¹⁷² For a detailed description of the events, see Tahsin Gemil, "Agresiunea otomano-tătaro-poloneză și căderea lui Petru Rareș" [Ottoman-Tartar-Polish aggression and Peter Rareș's fall], in *Petru Rareș*, 151–61.

caused the shift in Ottoman representation: starting with a less overt expression of anti-Ottoman feelings in the second reign of Peter, continuing with the outraged representation of Eftimie, and ending with the persecutions of Stephen Rareș.

Therefore, while representations of the Ottomans in that century sometimes shifted drastically, the actual behavior and attitude towards the Ottomans never changed: all the rulers followed the same pattern in their relations with the sultan by showing openness to the Empire while seeking alternative alliances. This one century between Stephen the Great and Stephen Rareș is the most crucial for understanding the overall image of the Ottomans in Moldavia. Given the set of images that encompass modest but also scandalous images of the Other, one argument is certain: in Moldavian eyes, the Ottoman Other was strange and resentful, "just like dirty water,"¹⁷³ as chronicler Macarie puts it in a creative metaphor of repulsion towards the sultan's subjects.

¹⁷³ "Cronica lui Macarie," 207.

List of Contributors

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Kudos to Marianna Birnbaum and Marcell Sebők for bringing together this splendid collection of essays on representation across cultural borders, especially the Christian/Muslim border in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. Along with western views, we hear for the first time voices from Eastern Europe, from Hungarians writing of Suleyman the Magnificent, Moldavians of the Ottoman threat, and more. Drawing from poetry, theatre, histories, travel accounts, letters, and paintings, the authors give us a picture more complex than the binary of Us and the Other. *Practices of Coexistence* speaks to our own time, when understanding of cultural difference is more urgent than ever.

Natalie Zemon Davis, University of Toronto

The issue this volume addresses, the construction of the “other,” came to the focus of historical research several decades ago, with the “anthropological turn.” Recent political developments—refugee crisis, terrorism incited by the IS, xenophobic right-wing turn in politics—gave this theme again a burning actuality. The place from where these studies were issued was a seminar at CEU, an international university, where many kinds of “others” are studying together: the authors of this volume are Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Turkish—taught by the cooperation of an American and a Hungarian scholar. The central theme of the studies is the perception of the Muslim and Jewish others in Latin and Orthodox Christianity, in regions which have been, for many centuries, battlefields for different ethnicities, religions, and empires: South-Eastern Europe and North Africa. The essays show, with rich documentation and up-to-date conceptual tools, that besides the bloody conflicts there developed during the crucial period of early modernity noteworthy practices of coexistence, traditions from which we can still learn.

Gábor Klaniczay, Central European University, Budapest

This collection of studies on *Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perceptions* brings together a group of young historians whose major concern is with the stereotypical images of the “Ottoman Other,” of which Edward Said’s *Orientalism* has made us uncomfortably aware. Admittedly, while certain elements which later went into the conglomerate known as “orientalism” came from medieval anti-Islamic polemics and also from humanist constructions of “civilization,” the authors of this volume argue that the “superiority complex” supposedly legitimized by “science,” vis à vis an “immobile Orient ripe for European domination,” was not yet in place before the seventeenth century. By highlighting both Ottoman and “local” Balkan concerns and opinions, in addition to the better-known Spanish, French and English varieties, the present collection enlarges the reader’s perspective on the thorny question of how orientalism, Saidian-style, came into being.

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